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THE FOURTH DOWN

THE WELLWORTH COLLEGE SERIES

THE FOURTH DOWN

BY

LESLIE W. QUIRK

Author of "Freshman Dorn, Pitcher,"

"Baby Elton, Quarter-back," etc.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

HENRY S. WATSON



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TO
Horatio Winslow
CLASSMATE AT "WELLWORTH," TO WHOM I AM
INDEBTED FOR MANY SUGGESTIONS AND
FOR THE REFRESHING OF MANY
COLLEGE MEMORIES

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The Fourth Down

CHAPTER I

THE CALL FOR FRESHMEN

HIS name was Penfield Wayne, and he was a newly registered freshman at Wellworth University. Just now he sat at the window of his room, dividing his time between reading from the blue, paper-covered book in his hand, and pausing to stare out upon the lower campus. It was not a large room, and its decorations did not suggest that a student occupied it, if one excepted a flaring purple banner with the white letters, F. H. S. Between the bureau and the closet door stood a trunk labeled P. W. From beneath the bed peeped a dull yellow suit-case, with the same initials printed on one end.

The boy himself was about eighteen years old, with a frank, clean-cut, likable face, and a body that at first glimpse made him appear younger

than he was. He was undeniably small, but trimly built, and every line of his lithe and active body proclaimed athletic training. If further proof were needed, it was supplied by the book he held, which bore the title, "Official Football Guide," and by the eagerness with which his eyes scanned the lower campus, stretching from a point almost beneath his window to the white goal-posts more than one hundred yards away. It was on this field, he had learned, that the first practice was held.

Because he was a very new freshman, and had come to this strange city only the day before, he watched enviously as other students, evidently upper-classmen, met on the campus, and shook hands with undisguised gladness, or slapped each other boisterously upon the shoulders. If this were Falder High School now, he would have been the most eager of them all to welcome old friends. But he had graduated from Falder, and this was Wellworth, where he knew absolutely nobody at all. Worse still, he was only a freshman; perhaps — and he smiled knowingly — he had done well to remain in his room until the college world began to adjust itself.

As if in answer to the unformed suspicion of

the treatment he might expect from the sophomores, a shout from downstairs brought him quickly to his feet.

“Freshmen! Freshmen! We want freshmen!”

It was a chant that echoed through the halls of Mrs. Pillsbury’s boarding-house, and sang its way into every room from cellar to attic.

Penfield Wayne did not wait to hear the words again. Quietly he pulled down the window-shade, darkening the room; then, as softly as possible, he twisted the key in the lock, and wheeled the bureau into a barricade before the door.

“Freshmen! Freshmen! All freshmen out!”

He smiled a little as he took an inflated football from his trunk, allowing it to dangle from the lacing thong. They might catch him, very probably they would; but he did not intend to be captured without some kind of a scrimmage.

“Freshmen! Freshmen! We want every freshman in the house!”

Up the stairs tramped heavy boots. There must be fifty sophomores at least, thought Penfield. Straight and unhesitatingly to his door they stomped and stumbled.

“Hi! You freshman in there!”

In the room, the boy grasped the football string

a little more tightly, and swung the oval to and fro. But he did not speak.

"Why don't you answer us? We know you're in there; we saw you pull down the curtain."

"I met him dis morning on the stairs," said a deep voice with a slight German accent. "He's one of those little poys. His last name is Wayne; his first is Pen — Penni —"

"If he is only as big as a cent," chuckled another voice, "his name is probably Penny Wayne. Sure it isn't Penny Weight?"

"Perhaps," burred the first speaker carelessly. "Anyhow, I think right now he's scared out of his life."

This last taunt was too much for Penfield. "Oh, am I?" he shouted. "Well, if you want to find out how 'scared' I am, come on in and get me. I may be pretty new here, but you can't frighten me that way. Come on and break down the door, because I've a nice little surprise waiting for you."

Out in the hall, his words had a strange effect. Instead of the moment of quiet he expected, there came instead a wild outburst of laughter.

"Listen, fellows," said one of the group presently, "he thinks we are sophomores."

"Yes," challenged Penfield, bracing himself,



Then Wellworth loosed its full fury and power of attack. FRONTISPIECE. See page 316.

"I know you're sophomores, and I'm ready for you any time you want to break in."

"Here! Here!" called a new voice from the hall, "your name is Wayne, isn't it? You needn't deny it, because Mrs. Pillsbury told us, and Petey here knows it is. We're not sophomores; we're freshmen, just as you are, and we're rounding up everybody in the class to help out at the cap rush this afternoon."

The boy in the room hesitated. "How do I know that?"

"You'll never know it, Mister Penny Penfield, if that's your name, unless you come out here and look us over. If you think we are going to break down Mrs. Pillsbury's nice door just to get you to do your duty, you're very much mistaken. Of course, if you are afraid to take part in the cap rush —"

"Afraid!" Wayne tossed the football into the open trunk, and prepared to wheel the bureau back into its place.

"That's what I said," continued the voice from the hall. "Now, if you aren't afraid, and if you haven't heard of the class rush, and if you really think we are sophomores — Well, I'll give you my word of honor that you're misjudging us."

In another second or two, the boy had slid the bureau from the door, and turned the key in the lock. As the door swung open, he saw that his besiegers were, not fifty, but three. Quite as much at ease as if their welcome had been more cordial, they stalked into the room and sat down on the window-seat and convenient chairs. There was a round-faced, rosy-cheeked youth of about nineteen, who, Wayne decided, was the one who mispronounced his English when excited; in the big Morris-chair lounged a corpulent, good-natured giant; on the arm of the small rocker perched a thin, long-legged fellow whose blinking eyes and red-lined nose suggested that ordinarily he wore glasses. All three were clothed in ragged, out-at-elbows coats, frayed trousers and patched and faded sweaters. None of them had hats or caps.

The caller on the rocking-chair arm stopped swinging his long legs.

"This is the idea, Penny Penfield," he began, rolling the name about on his tongue. "Yonder lad on the window-seat is Petey Eidenfessel, and the tame elephant in your comfy Morris-chair is Wallie Moogers, and I'm B. Terwilliger, commonly known as 'Twig.' We are all freshmen, even if I do look smarter than the others, and we're

all going up to the cap rush on the upper campus. Is that plain? ”

Wayne nodded. “ But what is this cap rush? You see, my people moved to this State from the East just this fall, and I don’t know anything about the college customs.”

“ We can tell you about that later. The point is, are you willing to take part? ”

Wayne stopped pacing the room with an indignant snort. “ Am I willing? If there’s some fun, of course I’m willing. Why, I — I’m a football player.” He had hardly said the words before he knew he had blundered; Terwilliger’s quick wink to the German was distressingly plain.

“ That’s fine! ” said the spokesman of the group. “ How much do you weigh, Penny? Must tip the scales at nearly a hundred pounds, don’t you? You and Wallie Moogers here should make a fine team; he could do the pushing and you the dodging.” He rose to his feet. “ But this doesn’t do us any good. The rush begins at two, and it’s nearly that now. If you are coming, you’d better slip on some old clothes.”

“ All right,” agreed Wayne; “ I’ll just put on this old sweater and be with you in no time.”

Two minutes later, the four of them turned from

Murray Street into State, which was already crowding with little groups hurrying toward the upper campus.

"That's where the rush is held," explained Moogers, falling in by Wayne's side. "Jadman, a junior from my home town, told me all about it yesterday. You see," he pointed out, "there's Science Hall on the right and Pharmacy Hall on the left. Well, that flagstaff between the two buildings is the center of the rush."

"Yes," put in Eidenfessel, "and if you want to see what sophomores look like already, look at them about the pole. Why, they're as thick as flies around a molasses barrel."

"They won't be that way long," promised Terwilliger; "not after Penny Penfield gets after them. You know, he's a football player."

With difficulty, Wayne controlled himself. He had fully determined to leave behind him all his old habits when he came to Wellworth. In particular, moreover, he had resolved to avoid making himself the topic of every conversation. He realized more fully than he had before in his room that his remark about football was foolish and in the worst possible taste. He *was* a player, and he did intend to try hard to make the team; but that

was no excuse for talking about it. He turned away from Terwilliger.

"Sca-a-ared gre-e-en, freshmen!" came the taunting cry of the sophomores.

Penfield Wayne straightened his head with a jerk, keenly alert to the fun at hand. There was no time now to think of himself and his ambitions; there was an enemy to meet and conquer.

Again the derisive cry arose:

"Sca-a-ared gre-e-en, freshmen!"

But this time it was met with an answering volley. The four were now within fifty feet of the flagpole, having crossed the sidewalk that separated the upper campus from the street. As they scrambled up the terrace, Wayne could distinguish the sophomores fantastically dressed in their oldest suits, and circling about the staff with outbursts of laughter and defiance. Nearer at hand was a constantly growing group of freshmen, and around both bodies, in the form of an inverted U, stretched the line of spectators who had come to witness the rush.

"Sophomore! Sophomore!

You're going to get your shirty tore!"

Vociferous applause greeted this effort of Terwilliger's, and the freshman class caught it up and boomed it forth with mighty glee.

As the four gained the group of their classmates, Wayne found himself in a strange, jabbering, shouting assemblage. For the most part, the freshmen were decked in their oldest clothes, although here and there the boy caught a glimpse of some youth whose sense ran more to style than to the fitness of dressing for a class rush. Moogers, too, found time to note these exceptions, and to chuckle over them.

"Just look at that fellow with the checked suit," he told Wayne in a low voice. "Why, after this clash is over, he'll spend a week picking the checks out of the grass."

"But what is the object of the rush?" asked Penfield. "What are we trying to do?"

Moogers pointed to the top of the pole. "Do you see that little business where the gilded ball generally is?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's a cap, a cardinal cap. It belongs to the sophomores just now, and they are defying us to take it away from them. If we fail to capture it, we are supposed to wear green skull caps

instead of the sort of head-gear we like best. If we do get and keep it, however, we wear what we please. The whole thing was devised as a substitute for brutal and pointless hazing, which was given up by common consent, with the understanding that the freshman-sophomore antagonism might be worked off in this harmless manner. The cap on the pole is leather, which makes it difficult to tear, and dyed cardinal, which is Wellworth's color. At the beginning of each school year, it is turned over to the sophomores, who defend it from two to four on the last registration day. Understand now? "

"Yes," said Wayne, his eyes sparkling, "but how can we hope to get it? "

"Don't ask me. Probably some of the quicker-witted fellows of our class will figure out a method. Putting it at the top of a flagpole is a new trick this year, I believe. But we'll get it; don't worry."

No member of the freshman class, indeed, appeared to be worrying in the least. The trouble seemed to lie in the vast abundance of plans. Each boy was shouting at the top of his voice, offering advice, exhortation and entreaty; and it was not until Petey Eidenfessel had been raised

upon a pair of friendly shoulders that there was any semblance of orderly concentration.

“Fellows,” he shouted, “listen once. We must get together and make a charge already and —”

“But what are we going to do if we do reach the pole?” interrupted Wayne, unable longer to withhold his impatience.

“Oh, that will be all right,” mocked Terwiler; “you are a football player, you know, and can help us out. Come on!”

Just how the charge began, no one could have told. But in a moment, the entire class, outnumbering the sophomores on defense, started on a clumsy trot toward the pole, like some great, slow-moving monster that threatened to sweep all before it. Penfield Wayne dropped back a bit until the more leisurely Wallie Moogers was by his side, and prepared for the shock.

CHAPTER II

THE CARDINAL CAP

ALTHOUGH the charge of the freshmen proved a stirring spectacle to those who watched from the outskirts of the warring classes, they could see from the first that it was destined to fail. For the attacking party, instead of bunching closely in such a way as to strike the other little army with the point of a human wedge, spread out in the form of a half-moon, which curled around the defenders as harmlessly as a wave laps its course about a rock.

"They haven't the slightest idea what they are doing," criticized "Dad" Lubbock, the football coach, from his vantage point higher up on the campus. "Why, they missed whatever chance they might have had."

Homer Hood, an upper-classman correspondent for one of the Chicago dailies, jotted down a memorandum in his note-book, and nodded sagely. But Frank Lakers, who played full-back on the

varsity football team, refused to accept the temporary repulse as final.

"You never can tell," he said. "Sometimes the freshman class wins after getting a mighty poor start. The one ahead of ours did."

The coach made no reply. He was busily engaged in searching among the struggling group for football candidates.

In the middle of the surging, tugging mass, Penfield Wayne found himself enjoying the rush as much as if it had been a game on the gridiron. Entirely without plan, the freshmen found themselves helpless before the more experienced sophomores. Even the advantage which the younger class had in numbers counted for nothing, owing to the fact that there was no way to distinguish friend from foe; this weakness, of course, resulted in their grappling and wrestling with each other, to the huge amusement of the sophomores who found time to witness these minor battles.

In the first charge, Wayne had clung close to Moogers, but the shock of the onslaught made him lose sight altogether of both Eidenfessel and Terwilliger. Not until the attack had plainly failed did he catch sight of them again. Vainly but desperately, Terwilliger was struggling with a

huge sophomore; near him Eidenfessel was being pushed back from the scene of the encounter by two more.

Wayne did not pause to think of a plan. With all the force of his compact little body, he caromed against Terwilliger's captor, utilizing the shoulder push or thrust which the interference in football employs to prevent a tackler's downing the runner. With a grunt of dismay the big sophomore toppled from his balance, releasing Terwilliger.

"Much obliged, Penny Penfield," said that freshman, as the two turned to the task of rescuing Eidenfessel. "Maybe you can play football, after all."

Wayne had no time to enjoy the glow of pleasure that he felt over the concession, for in another second they were struggling for Eidenfessel just as the old Greeks and Trojans must have fought for the body of Diomed.

"Get me loose," gasped the German boy, "and hurry quick. My sweater is all torn to pieces."

Wayne and Terwilliger each laid hold of a sophomore, and Eidenfessel added his force. By dint of much tugging and pulling, the little group was

soon in motion toward the crowd of freshmen which had dropped back momentarily, and the warriors of the other camp, realizing the peril, were soon as eager to loose their captor and scurry to safety themselves as they had been a moment before to hold fast.

Breathing hard, and much bedraggled and torn as to clothes, the freshmen presently gathered under the shadow of Science Hall. From the crowd about the flagstaff came the jeering battle-cry.

"What do you think we had better do, Penny Penfield?" asked Terwilliger, leaning weakly against the stone masonry.

"I — well, we need a plan most of all. And we need to know each other. Let's see —" He swooped suddenly upon the burnt embers of a bonfire. "Look here, if we rub our faces with this charcoal, we can at least recognize which are freshmen and which are not. That is the first step."

With yells of delight, Terwilliger and Eidenfessel commenced smearing their cheeks with the burned fragments. Moogers followed their example more slowly, but the others needed no urging. In another minute, the freshman badge

of identification was on each face. There was no word spoken, but it seemed the entire class recognized Penfield Wayne as the author of the idea. They turned to him for further advice.

"What does the little fellow say?" called a raw-boned farmer's boy who had lost half a vest in the heat of the conflict.

"If you mean me," said Wayne, "I say, stick together. If we can form into something like one of those old flying wedges in football, we can cleave our way right through them to the pole. Then somebody might climb it and toss us the cap."

"Good!" shouted Wallie Moogers, jumping up from the grass. "Come on, everybody, and try it."

As they formed into a compact mass, they caught once more the taunting cry from the sophomores:

"Sca-a-ared gre-e-en, freshmen!"

"Oh, we are, are we?" grunted the boy from the farm. "Well, you just wait and see, that's all. Now, who's going to climb for us? Can you do it, little fellow?"

"I'll try," answered Wayne stoutly, "but I'm not much of a climber, I'll confess."

"All right, then, let me do it. I've shinnied up enough trees. Winkle's my name."

"Three cheers for Wee Willie Winkle," shouted the irrepressible Terwilliger; and it was with this cheer on their lips, and with the very large Wee Willie Winkle at their head, that the freshmen formed for their second charge.

"That's better," approved Dad Lubbock, speaking to his player, Lakers; "that's the way it should have been done in the first place."

With a roar of triumph and defiance, the point of the V-shaped wedge bored its way into the loosely formed line of resisting sophomores. Before its irresistible force, they scattered on either side, watching it clear a broad path to the very pole itself.

"Yea-a-a, freshmen!"

It was the upper-classmen who were recognizing the freshman success in this manner, but the chargers, in the turmoil of the moment, had neither ears to listen nor breath to respond. They were forming about the flagstaff, struggling both to push back its erstwhile defenders and to clear a space at its base. Presently there came a brief lull.

"All right, Winkle," encouraged Wallie Moo-gers, "up you go."

With a spring from the big fellow's broad shoulders, the country boy had begun his climb. From the corner of his eye, Wayne saw the sophomores preparing to reclaim their lost ground. Eidenfessel also understood.

"Keep going," he shouted to Wee Willie, "and if we aren't here when you come down, throw the cap — anywhere."

But something was clearly wrong. Winkle's long legs wrapped themselves about the pole, and his hands reached high above his head for a fresh hold. Every limb wriggled as if he were climbing fast. But, as Wayne watched with puzzled eyes, the body above him slipped gradually closer and closer to the ground.

The sophomore charge was now under way. Profiting by what they had experienced, it crashed upon the freshmen about the pole in the form of the old, discarded football wedge, scattering them right and left. As they fled before the attack, Terwilliger spoke.

"No use," he coughed, fighting for breath. "You were foolish to suggest such a plan. Why, you might have known the pole would be greased. That Wee Willie wonder couldn't climb to the top if he were Sandow."

As the freshmen fled, leaving poor Winkle to slip down into the very arms of his enemies, the victorious sophomores sounded a new cry of derision:

“We don’t like to holler,
We don’t like to boast,
But we’ll eat the freshman
Class on toast.”

Even Terwilliger could discover no answer to this. Once more the class retreated to the shadow of Science Hall, where it massed for a fresh consultation, still dogged and hopeful, in spite of the two rebuffs. Once more it was Penfield Wayne who proposed a plan, this time far more original and promising than the other.

“But I don’t quite understand,” objected Petey Eidenfessel, as he listened to Wayne’s hurried directions.

“Run along to the store with Terwilliger,” suggested the other, “and he will explain on the way. Won’t it work, Twig?”

“With me to handle one end of it,” boasted Terwilliger, “it can’t fail. It’s the best scheme yet.”

“But what is it?” demanded Wallie Moogers, as he stared after the two departing freshmen.

Wayne outlined briefly the plan. “I thought

of it," he concluded, "when I saw Winkle slipping on the pole, and realized that we could never get to the cap that way. I think it will work out."

"It promises mighty well," agreed Moogers enthusiastically, "but we mustn't let them suspect that we are waiting for anything. Just pass the word quietly, and we'll keep the sophomores interested by pretending awfully hard to recapture Wee Willie Winkle."

Ten minutes later, the football coach yawned slightly. "Well," he said, "we might as well go. It seems to be about all over except the shouting, and I have heard enough of that. They can't climb the pole, and the college won't let them chop it down. How else can the cap be secured? I hope none of my football material has been spoiled in this crazy game."

"Wait a minute, Dad," begged Lakers. "I think something is going to happen. See that long-legged freshman on top of Science Hall, and — yes, sir, there's a squatty chap on the roof of Pharmacy Hall, too."

About this time, the sophomores also discovered the two boys on the buildings.

"Come down, children," yelled a wit; "come down now, or I shall tell teacher on you."

Thunderous laughter greeted this sally. But Terwilliger, on Science Hall, and Eidenfessel, on Pharmacy Hall, seemed in nowise concerned. As the crowd on the campus watched, the former hurled a heavy stick from his roof to the other.

"I knew it," exclaimed Lakers. "I knew they had some idea. Just watch. Ah-h!"

"I don't understand," confessed Dad Lubbock, the coach. "What is it?"

"There was a cord attached to the stick one of them threw to the other. It stretches between them. Now you know what is coming."

Dad Lubbock was jumping about as excitedly as a child who has just found out what makes the wheels go around.

"Isn't that great?" he cried. "They'll bring the cord alongside the pole, give it a quick flip — and off goes the cap! Why, if the freshman who hatched that scheme has the build for it, he would do mighty well as quarter-back on the team, eh, Lakers?"

The sophomores, too, had begun to understand. They moved nervously about the base of the pole, apparently unprepared to offset the advantage their rivals had gained.

"You can't get it loose," called one of them; "it's nailed on."

"Don't be foolish," boomed Arnie Borglum, the sophomore who played guard on the football team. "It's not fastened, of course. Spread out, fellows! Spread out and catch it when it falls."

The cord was now stretched tautly between Science and Pharmacy Halls, and was rubbing against the pole a few feet beneath the cardinal cap.

"All ready, freshmen?" shouted Terwilliger.

"All ready!" roared back Wallie Moogers.

With a quick upward fling of his arm, Terwilliger raised the cord, snapping it smartly against the leather cap. For a moment, there was no result. Then the cardinal head-piece sailed into the air, while below on the campus scores of pairs of eager hands were raised to catch it.

CHAPTER III

“A FIND FOR THE FOOTBALL TEAM!”

As the cardinal cap fluttered down toward the stubble of upstretched hands, Dad Lubbock drew a deep breath. Usually a man of very few words, and with a face that could be as expressionless as a sheet of white paper, the football coach was now visibly excited. Both Hood and Lakers looked at him curiously.

“What’s the matter, Dad?” asked the latter.

“It’s the prettiest game I ever watched,” declared the coach. “We’ve never had a better class rush at old Wellworth, and it’s due to the young Napoleon who is moving that freshman crowd.”

The leather cap fell slowly, as a wounded bird might, and finally dropped into a group of sophomores clustered about the base of the pole.

“Follow the ball with your eyes, Lakers. See that little crowd up there? Do you know what those freshmen are going to do? It’s the old flying

wedge formation we used back in the early nineties. And that little chap who is leading them, up there at the sharp point of the angle, is the one who has been managing the whole play. He will bear watching.”

Once more the freshmen charged, and once more the sophomores gave way. At the very apex of the wedge was Penfield Wayne, with Moogers and Wee Willie Winkle on either side. Like a gigantic saw shearing through soft wood, they cut their way to the pole. Here, before the sophomores could mass to rush aid to the few who were defending the cap, the wedge opened and swallowed them.

Dad Lubbock snapped his fingers nervously.

“No, they won’t get the cap — yet. Those fellows who are surrounded will throw it over the freshmen’s heads to their own classmen, and we shall have the rush running all over the upper campus, just as we did two years ago. I wonder if the little chap overlooked that point.”

As the coach had prophesied, the cap was not yet won. The besieging party, conquering the minor obstacles, swept aside the few loyal guards, and closed in about the sophomore who held the coveted trophy. But as they pounced upon him,

he dodged back a step or two, raised the cap in his right hand, and sent it sailing through the air for the second time that day.

But he had not thrown at random. On the very outskirts of the human whirlpool, Arnie Borglum, the football player, was waiting. He had taken his place there as soon as his mind, from a vast experience on the gridiron, had told him the futility of stopping the flying wedge. His arms were raised skyward, offering a target to the surrounded sophomore, and the cap whirled into his very hands.

"That ends it," conceded Lakers. "Borglum has it now."

This time it was the coach who refused to admit defeat for the freshmen.

"It's not over yet," he declared. "Not quite over, Lakers. The game isn't ever over till time is called — and the little fellow hasn't admitted defeat."

Although he had led the attack of the charging class, Wayne had wasted no time in the futile scramble near the pole. Like Dad Lubbock, he had foreseen that before the sophomores would surrender the prize, they would at least risk a throw, and his keen eyes had discovered the foot-

ball player edging out from the crowd. He was by Borglum's side almost as soon as the cap was caught.

“ It's Waterloo for your Napoleon,” said Lakers softly. “ He's a clever little boy, but if he knew a bit more he wouldn't rush Arnie Borglum.”

“ Watch him,” whispered Dad Lubbock. “ Watch him. I believe he's a find for the football team. There!”

As Wayne swooped down upon the sophomore with the obvious intention of snatching the cap from him, Borglum smiled lazily, and shifted the leather head-gear to his other hand, to leave free the right for warding off the fiery freshman. But the boy, seeming suddenly to realize the impossibility of wresting the cap from Arnie, dived for his knees and brought him down with a perfect tackle.

“ He's tumbled over Borglum,” said Dad Lubbock, with a hint of pride in his voice. “ Why, that little chap is a wonder — and look! He'll have the cap in a minute.”

Before Borglum could right himself, Moogers and another brawny freshman piled upon him, and Wayne grasped the cap in both hands, tugging hard to jerk it free.

Lakers shook his head. “ He can never pull

that cap away from Arnie Borglum," he declared, not without regret. "With Arnie's muscular fingers gripping it, the whole freshman class couldn't get it."

Dad Lubbock seemed on the verge of an Indian war dance. "Don't you understand, Lakers? The sophomores greased that cap to make it more difficult to hold, if by any chance a freshman did climb the pole. Borglum's grip is slipping now. The little chap's rubbed something on his hands to offset the grease."

As a matter of fact, this was more the result of luck than precaution. A hard tumble in a bit of sandy soil had gritted Wayne's hands, and the handling of the cap had left Borglum's hold distressingly treacherous. Once Penfield jerked without result, but on the second attempt the slippery leather trickled from the other's clawing fingers.

"It's his ball — cap, I mean," fairly shouted the coach, much to the surprise of a serious-minded senior who chanced to be at his side, and who prided himself on being as emotionless as Dad Lubbock. "Now watch him."

Along the foot of the upper campus ran Park Avenue. Between Wayne and this street was the greater portion of the outraged sophomores, al-

ready pounding up the hill toward him. The boy followed his natural instinct to run up the gentle slope toward Main Hall, a hundred yards or more from the point at which he had secured possession of the cap. Close at his heels followed Wee Willie Winkle and two or three others of the more nimble.

“Here, Lakers,” said Dad Lubbock, “that won’t do. Run out there and tell him the rules.”

The half-back smiled tolerantly, but offered no objection. As a junior, indeed, his sympathies were with the incoming class, and he raced forward to intercept the freshman. As he neared his side, Wee Willie Winkle pushed forward to protect the boy with the cap.

“Keep off, sophomore,” he warned grimly.

Lakers laughed. “I’m a junior,” he explained. “I just wanted to explain that it doesn’t count to carry the cap off by way of Main Hall. The rule of the game is that it must leave the campus over Park Avenue, down there at the foot of the hill. If you look back, you will see that the sophomores have stopped running.”

“Thanks,” said Wee Willie. He was wasting no breath with unnecessary words.

“Wish you luck,” flung back Lakers, as he turned to move once more to Dad Lubbock’s side.

Penfield Wayne and his interference halted for a brief discussion of the situation. Back of them, the battle seemed to have broken out anew, and the sophomores had apparently forgotten all about the cap; for, except for a thin line that bisected the middle of the campus, they were concentrating their strength in a mighty struggle at the edge of the terrace that divided the campus from Park Avenue.

Dad Lubbock chewed his lip. "It is hardly fair, Lakers, but I am afraid the sophomores have the upper hand now. It's a shame, too, that nobody explained that new rule to them."

"What rule?"

"Oh, I forgot you came back late last fall. Well, there was a ruling to the effect that any contestant, freshman or sophomore, who was forced down the terrace into the street must be considered out of the game, as it were. . . . See! I knew it!"

With a mighty roar of triumph, an overwhelming number of sophomores rushed a third of the freshman class to the edge of the slope, and, after a brisk struggle, on down to the walk. True, the vanquished dragged with them a few of the victors, but the odds were all in favor of the second-year boys.

“Too bad! I don’t suppose half the freshmen knew anything about that ruling. See, they are trying to come back, but Henderson is umpiring and won’t allow it. Well, what’s our young hero going to do now, with his class disorganized?”

The little group near the coach, of which Wayne was the center, was constantly increasing. Wee Willie Winkle was already there, with two or three others; to these were added Moogers, puffing violently; Eidenfessel and Terwilliger, come to earth from their respective roofs; Billick, a freshman clad in football togs; and Oskison, a sinewy youth whose shirt sleeves had been completely torn off in the struggle. From below, still others were running up the hill to them.

“Now, Lakers,” pointed out Dad Lubbock, “we shall see if the boy has the real stuff in him of which generals are made. There is just one way for him to get the cap through that sophomore class. It’s so simple that he probably won’t think of it.”

“You mean he must take the chance of boring straight through?” asked the football player.

“No, not that; another way! And if the boy has the common sense for which I give him credit, he will start it right now while the sophomores are

engaged in the modest task of cheering themselves."

The sudden cessation of shouting at the foot of the hill marked the sudden movement of the freshmen half way up the campus. Their charge appeared foolhardy; it seemed they were running point-blank against a stone-wall. With the sophomores barring their way, with a third of their own class disqualified and with the balance confused and disheartened, the chances of success were few. But Dad Lubbock smiled serenely.

As the little band swung into action, it spread out in a slanting line, with Wayne tipping the lower end. In this formation, he was the first to reach the enemy, and was met by a sophomore who leaped toward him. The boy with the cap dodged quickly, almost eluding his tackler, and passing a dark object to Wee Willie Winkle as he fell.

The next instant the attack swerved to the country boy, but not before he had thrown the object to Billick. By this time, almost the entire sophomore class was on the scent of the cap, following it as eagerly as a football team does a fumbled ball. Billick threw to Oskison, Oskison to Moogers, and —

"They can't make it," said Lakers, genuinely disappointed. "See, that big fellow didn't have time to pass it along."

But Dad Lubbock was chuckling loudly, and beating his knee with his hand.

"They have made it, Lakers; they have made it. Can't you follow the ball? The fat boy hasn't the cap at all; it is under the belt of the little fellow who started out with it. They've been throwing something else to each other."

It was true. Paying no attention to the fate of Moogers, who had been forcibly stopped on the other side of the field, Penfield Wayne was covering the distance to the bottom of the hill with the speed of a hungry fox after a rabbit. But the course was not yet entirely clear. In his path was Arnie Borglum.

It took the big sophomore an instant to realize the situation. During that tick of time, the runner had swerved to the right, and was on even terms with Borglum before the latter was in action. His effort was worthy of better results, but the chase had begun too late. As he dived in a last futile effort at tackling, his fingers clutched Wayne's clothes, gripped for a moment, and then tore loose. They were still greasy!

The freshman ran on to the top of the terrace, paused to look behind him, and tumbled head-over-heels to the bottom. But the cap was still in his possession, and he had carried it from the campus.

Dr. Henderson, gymnasium director and umpire, set him upon his feet. As he waited inquiringly, Wayne pulled forth the cardinal cap, and held it up. Immediately, the man blew a football whistle to mark the victory.

For an instant, there was silence. On the campus above, the sophomores moved about in disgruntled groups, each accusing the other of negligence. The freshmen, very much scattered and not wholly sure of what had occurred, cheered feebly.

A heavy hand clapped upon Wayne's shoulder. Acting wholly on impulse, the boy lunged suddenly at this new danger, and upset somebody, without quite realizing what he had done. The shouting stopped dead.

"Never mind, Penny Penfield," mocked Terwilliger's voice; "you've only toppled over the football coach."

Wayne went suddenly cold. What was the fun of capturing a bit of cardinal leather if in do-

ing it he had sacrificed his chances of making the football team? If — Then, all at once, his mind brought him back to the present.

“ — and won the cap for us, anyhow,” Wallie Moogers was saying. “ Fellows, all together now. What’s the matter with Penny Penfield Wayne? ”

The answering shouts rattled the windows of Science Hall.

CHAPTER IV

SOPHOMORE VISITORS

It was the day after the cap rush. On the little bed in his room, Penny Wayne tossed restlessly. For one thing, the afternoon sun, slanting in at the edges of the brown shades, disturbed his closed eyes; for another, there remained with him in his troubled dreams a sense of some great impending danger.

As he slept, he was conscious enough to realize that he was dreaming, without having control enough of his mind to direct the queer fancies in their proper channels. Instead of dozing comfortably, he found himself chasing through a hair-raising nightmare, in which he raced down an endless football field pursued by a score of furious coaches. In spite of the fact that the running would leave him no snap or dash for the practice that afternoon, they persisted in their unpleasant behavior; and, try as he would, he could not wake up.



He wriggled to turn over, but the hands could not be shaken off. *Page 37.*

Suddenly, from the crowd that seemed to be watching, a tremendous figure leaped out at him; a thing clothed in a football suit of solid red. Without being told, he felt sure this was Dad Lubbock, the man he had so unceremoniously pushed into the gutter at the end of the class rush. He tried frantically to dodge, but the figure reached forth a long, entwining arm and — the boy waked to the workaday consciousness that somebody in real life was gripping at his coat.

He wriggled to turn over, but the hands could not be shaken off. As his eyes worked fairly open, a pillow-slip was wrapped neatly about his head. He kicked wildly with both feet once; then he abandoned further leg-tactics, for the very good reason that somebody was sitting on these important members. His arms he could not use at all, for from the very outset they had been firmly gripped and held close to his sides.

“Aw, Moogers!” he protested angrily. But he was promptly ashamed of the accusation; it was not Moogers, of course, nor any other freshmen who were treating him in this way.

Across his legs a small rope was being drawn so tightly that it cut. This accomplished, he was

turned over quite as if he were a parcel that must be well tied. Around each wrist the rope was knotted, tied about his ankles, brought once more to wrists and arms, and finally wound snugly around his body, leaving him as helpless as a papoose on a board.

As a crowning unpleasantness, a thumb and finger pinched his nose while another hand tucked a wad of cloth into his mouth. At last he realized the meaning of the words, "bound and gagged."

"Is it all right, Skid?" asked a voice.

"All right, fellows."

"Then we might as well leave you with him. Some of us will be within hailing distance, and if he proves obstinate Walber will relieve you at six. Anything more?"

"Nothing, thank you. If the time drags, I can read a little medieval history. Good-bye, fellows. See you at six, Walber — or maybe earlier."

The door closed, and Penny heard the tramp of many feet descending the stairs. A moment later, the pillow-slip was gently removed from his head, and he looked up to discover bending over him a boy whose face he remembered from yesterday's rush. It was that of a sophomore who had fig-

ured in the struggles at the base of the pole. Just now he was smiling down at the prostrate freshman.

"My name is Skidmore," he remarked pleasantly; "your name is Wayne, I believe. Glad to meet you, I'm sure. Sorry you can't talk to me, but you see we could hardly afford to risk anything unless —" he looked searchingly at the other — "unless your word of honor is pretty good property. How about it?"

Penny wrinkled his forehead to indicate that he did not understand.

"This is what I mean, Wayne. We have you here, and we are prepared to keep you here. But there is no reason why you should have that gag in your mouth, provided you will give me your word not to call for help, nor to speak above a whisper if I tell you to stay quiet. Do you want to promise me that?"

Penny nodded.

Skidmore paused a moment before removing the cloth from the other's mouth. "This is your word of honor, remember!" The freshman nodded again, and the captor deftly removed the gag with thumb and forefinger.

For a second or two, Wayne was inclined to be

angry, and it was with some difficulty that he controlled his temper.

"What is this?" he demanded. "Do you call it 'a way they have at old Wellworth?' "

Skidmore nodded appreciatively. "It's just that. How do you like it?"

"I am hugely pleased," remarked Penny ironically. "I feel like a chicken all ready for roasting. May I ask if you contemplate kidnaping me or burning me at the stake?"

"Neither, my dear Wayne," said the other, with a pained expression on his face, belied only by his twinkling eyes. "You are just going to stay right there on your comfy little bed."

"Stay here?" Penny's voice was incredulous. "You mean, stay here trussed up like this?"

"Exactly!"

This was too much for the freshman's temper. "I won't stand it," he declared warmly.

"But you seem to be standing it very well," observed Skidmore dryly, "or, rather, lying it."

Penny stiffened his back into an arch, straining every muscle. The rope gave no particle, and he relaxed with a murmur of anger.

"But look here, what's the sense of this joking? What's the reason for bundling me up like this?"

"Oh, there's a very good reason," said the sophomore, tossing an extra cushion into the Morris-chair and sitting down.

"But I can't stay here," objected the captive. "You see, this is the first day of football practice, and Mr. Lubbock says positively that every man trying for the team must report to him in the locker room of the gymnasium at 3.15." He squirmed over on his side as far as the ropes would permit. "Why, if you will look at that little clock on the mantel, you will find the alarm set for three o'clock."

Skidmore smiled agreeably. "Yes, we all know about the practice," he said. "The only question is whether you want to be there at 3.15 or not."

"Of course, I want to be there."

"Very well. Now, answer me one little question, and I'll turn you loose."

"I don't understand."

The sophomore stood up, and looked squarely into his eyes. "As the ring-leader of the rush yesterday, you managed to carry the cardinal cap off the upper campus. You either told the others of your class where to hide it or agreed with their suggestions. Anyhow, you must know where it is. Don't you?"

Penny nodded. Even at that moment, Terwilliger was supposed to be crossing the lake to place it beneath a certain boat-house. Of course, he knew where it was to be hidden.

“Good! Now for the question. Where is that cardinal cap?”

The freshman was plainly disconcerted. “Why, that’s our business,” he retorted. “I can’t tell you that.”

“No?” Skidmore sat down, apparently in no whit disappointed. “In that case, my young friend, I shall have the pleasure of remaining with you all of this beautiful afternoon. At six, if you still refuse to tell us the hiding-place, my class-mate, Mr. William Effenwell Walber, will relieve me. Can I help you to a drink of water or anything of that kind? No? All right. Please do not forget yourself by raising your voice, or it may prove embarrassing to both of us.”

After a minute or two of silence, the freshman looked at the little alarm clock. It was 2.30. He announced this fact to his guard.

“Of course,” said Skidmore pleasantly. “Tempus certainly does fugit. In another minute it will be twenty-nine of three. Unless you have made up your mind to remain here indefinitely,

you might give me the desired information now. Dad Lubbock is a mighty strict disciplinarian, and has little patience with candidates who do not report for the first practice."

Wayne shut his lips grimly. A fly buzzed over his face, and Skidmore courteously fanned it away. On the mantel, the little clock ticked in a maddening, methodical manner; as if it were intent only upon carrying the minute hand half-way around the dial in the shortest possible time. The sophomore smiled to himself, and all at once Penny decided the whole thing must be a practical joke. At the proper moment, he would be released. No class would keep an ambitious player from football practice merely to find out where a cap was hidden. From this point in the reasoning, it was only another step to the argument that no candidate would miss football practice merely to keep a secret about the hiding-place of a soiled leather trophy.

"Have you a dictionary?" asked the sophomore, looking up from his book.

"On the lower shelf of that little book-case."

"Thank you," said Skidmore politely. He was apparently making himself at home.

Slowly but inevitably, the hands of the clock

crept around the dial. It was twenty-five minutes of three — twenty-two — twenty! The time-piece ticked on without cessation. Occasionally, the sophomore turned a page in his book. Except for these noises, there was not a sound.

But even as the boy on the bed twisted his head uneasily, the silence was broken. He caught his breath with a little gasp of hope. Somebody was coming up the front stairs. It was probably Moogers, and — yes, he was certain of it now — Eidenfessel was with him. They would open the door and —

The sophomore leaped silently to his feet. With one finger on his lips, to remind Wayne of his promise to remain still, he tiptoed to the door and turned the key. Both of the occupants of the room waited expectantly.

“Locked,” came Moogers’ heavy voice. “We’re too late to catch him.”

“He told me to stop for him,” argued Eidenfessel, “and I should call to walk with him to the gymnasium.”

“I know, but he’s so eager to get to the practice on time that he’s probably started an hour ahead. Come on; we are sure to find him at the gymnasium.”

The two freshmen moved away from the door, and tramped heavily back down the stairs. Skidmore drew a long breath.

"Pretty close call, that," he observed.

"It isn't a joke, I'm afraid," Penny told himself, glancing from the imperturbable captor to the clock, which marked the time at 2.50. "I must get loose somehow or other. Why, I can't miss the first practice, and offend the coach again."

He twisted his right hand, but made no progress. So tightly was the rope tied that it was out of the question to work it free. He tried the leg knots, but they, too, proved fast and unyielding. Before he was done with his tests, it was five minutes of three.

But he had not given up hope, and presently he saw a possible escape. Altogether foolishly, his captors had secured him with a single piece of rope, carrying it from his arms to his feet and back again. If he could only get a little slack, he might loosen one of the knots in this fashion! He maneuvered cautiously, and finally discovered that he could move his right leg slightly, and thus relieve the taut bonds.

He set to work furtively but with every nerve bent to the effort. Although there was no time to

waste, it was necessary to accomplish the result without disturbing Skidmore. Slowly and with infinite patience, he rolled his right foot about in the loop that bound it, gradually working it loose until it caught only at the heel. A final jerk would release it.

It was now two minutes of three.

He kicked silently, realizing that he must work cautiously until he had utilized the slack of the rope and could free his hands. If —

The sophomore yawned and arose. "They told me to look you over every little while," he apologized, coming over to the bed. Then he whistled. "Hello! What are you, anyhow? King of the handcuffs? Well, I am afraid I must sew you up all over again. . . . What's that?"

The sudden interruption was the ding-a-ling of the alarm clock, set for the hour of three. The clanging set aquiver every tense nerve of Wayne's body. An anger filled his heart. Why should he be chosen to suffer all these indignities for a ridiculous cap? Surely, he had done his share the day before in planning the means of knocking it from the pole and then in outwitting the sophomores and carrying it from the campus. It was utterly unreasonable to expect him to miss the first foot-

ball practice because he chose to remain silent about the hiding-place of the cardinal cap.

"I'll tell you where it is," he told Skidmore suddenly. "Terwilliger took it over to Spring Point this afternoon. He is going to hide it under the second boat-house from the end. Yes, I am willing to give you my word of honor I am telling the truth. Now, take off this fool rope."

His captor raised the window, and poked out a cautious head.

"All right, fellows," he called.

Then he quickly untied the rope that bound Wayne, waited until his class-mates had come to the door, and bowed himself out with elaborate politeness.

CHAPTER V

IN THE SWIMMING - TANK

THE instant his unwelcome callers were gone, Wayne tossed his football togs into an old suitcase, and hurried across the lower campus to the gymnasium. Here, seated upon the iron fence that protected the patch of green lawn in front of the main entrance, he discovered Wallie Moogers, Petey Eidenfessel and Wee Willie Winkle, all wearing new hats. As Penny approached, they saluted him gravely by raising them from their heads.

To the boy's disappointment, however, both Moogers and Winkle declined flatly to join him in reporting for the first football practice. Eidenfessel, too, seemed disinclined to try for the team.

"I don't care much for the game," he confessed frankly, "and Terwilliger tells me a freshman has about as much chance of making the varsity eleven as — as the sophomores have of getting back that cardinal cap yet."

"Oh!" said Wayne, startled by a sudden twinge of conscience. "Oh!" Then, as the three looked at him in surprise, he stumbled on with his speech. "Why, of course a freshman has a chance. There's no first-year rule at Wellworth, and I understand the coach expects to develop several new players to take the place of those who graduated last year. Besides, Terwilliger thrives on unfounded suspicions, doesn't he?"

Moogers nodded carelessly. "About as pessimistic as he is refreshing," he grinned good-naturedly.

Eidenfessel stepped down from the fence. "Well," he said doubtfully, "I don't mind getting out for a day or two, no. Come along, poys."

"It's too comfortable here," declined Moogers lazily.

"I'd like to join you," confessed Winkle, "but — well, there's a reason why I can't. I'll see you later in the gymnasium."

As nothing Penny could say altered their decision, he and Eidenfessel finally moved on into the building without them. In the dressing-room, with its long rows of lockers, or clothes-closets, the two found a noisy crowd donning sweaters, jackets and padded moleskins. Here and there

they saw a cardinal jersey, with a great white W on the breast, but for the most part the playing togs were of a nondescript type that proclaimed the wearers either new candidates or fellows who had failed to win the varsity letter the previous season.

Long before the more stolid Eidenfessel had arrayed himself to his satisfaction, Wayne was in his own suit and eager to be up and away. When they finally emerged from the gymnasium, the lower campus was dotted freely with players, and around the outskirts lounged scores of spectators, who had turned out to witness the first practice.

The coach, Dad Lubbock, began by trotting the whole squad twice around the field as a breather. Next, he separated them into two general groups: in one, all candidates for line positions, with the exceptions of those who were trying for ends; in the other, candidates for full-back, quarter, halves and ends. The first group he turned over to a tall, muscular young fellow, who proved to be Parker, the captain of the team; and the other squad he took under his own wing. As Eidenfessel was trying for half-back, and Wayne for quarter, the two found themselves in this latter division, under the watchful eye of Dad Lubbock himself.

The coach led them to one side of the campus, where a padded effigy, stuffed with hay, dangled from a scaffold, for all the world like a man who had been hanged. This proved to be the "dummy," which they tackled in turn, and which was so arranged with weights and a rope and pulley that it could be carried several feet and brought to earth.

Eidenfessel's turn came before his class-mate's. His tackle was not a pronounced success, and Dad Lubbock made him try it again.

"Fight it," he commanded; "go at it with more steam, as if it were trying to escape, and bring it down hard — hard! Get it just above the knees. Don't shrink when you tackle. Now, let me see you do it once more. . . . That's a little better, but you are too mild with it. Not afraid, are you?"

The tackler shook his head without speaking, but Penny Wayne saw the blood come to his cheeks. He was about to offer a word of consolation when Dad Lubbock singled him out.

"Here, you little fellow over there. Wayne, aren't you? You ought to prove fiery enough, if I may judge from what I observed and — er — experienced yesterday. All ready now!"

Penny shut his lips tightly, fixed his eyes upon that portion of the dummy which he meant to grasp, and ran forward toward the swinging figure. He caught it neatly, carrying it with him as he fell. But just as he was dropping upon it, his fingers slipped, and the dummy jerked free of his arms altogether. He rose to his feet with a sheepish grin.

"A real runner would shake himself free every time," said the coach dryly. "Don't show us how graceful and how fast you are; the sole object is to down the dummy with a fair tackle. At it again!"

The second time, Penny ran more slowly, and gripped the grotesque figure more firmly. When he had wrestled it to the ground, he rose and flapped the dirt from his padded pants, firm in the belief that the tackle deserved a word of praise.

"Next man!" snapped Dad Lubbock. "Never mind making your toilet, Wayne; we'll try falling on the ball presently."

Penny's fists clenched suddenly. He was conscious — or believed he was, which amounted to the same thing — of a subtle enmity toward him on the part of the coach. Could it be possible that the man was petty enough to harbor a prejudice

because he had bumped into him yesterday? If that proved the case —

“It was a goot tackle,” affirmed Eidenfessel at his side, shaking his head doubtfully and staring at the coach. “A goot tackle, Penny.”

After a few minutes, Dad Lubbock signified that they were finished with the dummy for the present, and that the next practice would be falling upon the ball. This he began himself, showing them how to throw their bodies upon the rolling leather, gather it in their arms, and then curl protectingly about it.

Both Eidenfessel and Wayne had been through this drill on their high school teams. The German boy's attempt brought no praise from the coach, but neither did it warrant criticism, which was proof that he was satisfied. Penny, however, determined to win a word of commendation when his turn came. Instead of falling upon the ball and being technically downed where he lay, the freshman plunged for it, hit the soft turf with his shoulder, and, completing a somersault, landed full upon his feet, with the oval tucked under his arm. A little murmur of applause rippled from the crowd on the side-lines.

But Dad Lubbock was not pleased. “Wayne,”

he said curtly, "we will dispense with any grandstand play. I told you to fall upon the ball, and not to do a tumbling act. Try again."

Penny obeyed sullenly. He was certain now that the coach was singling him out for unjust criticism. There were tears of rage in his eyes when he brought back the ball the second time, and he whispered to Eidenfessel that Terwilliger might be right about a freshman's having no chance to make the team.

Presently, after each candidate had been given an opportunity to fall upon the ball, Dad Lubbock called to the other squad, which was crouching before an imaginary opposing team and charging forward at a signal from Parker. When the linemen had joined the other division, the coach held up his hand.

"That will be all for today," he announced. "Tomorrow, we shall try tackling a runner with the ball, and lining up two or three elevens for preliminary signal practice. Trot around the field twice, and then take a shower bath in the gymnasium."

As Penny Wayne fell in with the others, he was conscious of an overwhelming sense of disappointment. For this routine bit of exercise, he had

sacrificed — no, perhaps that wasn't the word; but he had done something very much against his natural inclination just to be present at the first practice. What he had expected it to develop, he could not have made clear to himself; but it had seemed inadequate and childish. Still, Dad Lubbock had been coaching for many years, and must know his business, and be efficient, and earnest, and fair — Here he gulped uncertainly, interrupting the train of his thought. Presently, however, he was smiling again, and not nearly as ready to condemn. Perhaps, after all, if he practised faithfully, and took extreme care not to offend on or off the field, Dad Lubbock would quickly forget the accident of the day before.

The freshman took his shower baths, first hot and then cold, and rubbed his body with a rough towel until the skin glowed red and warm. As he started toward his locker, he heard his name called, and whirled quickly on his heels. Protruding from a half-opened door was Wee Willie Winkle's red head, with the hair wet and glistening, and Wee Willie Winkle's beckoning finger. Behind him was the swimming-tank.

Penny walked toward it. When he was almost there, the door closed in his very face. As he

swung it open, and passed into the great room, a hand slapped loudly upon his back, and a voice cried:

“Tag! You’re it!”

Before Wayne could move, Winkle had dived from the low marble balcony into the tank. A dozen heads were bobbing up and down in the water. On a high spring-board at one end, Oskison was balancing himself. In a trapeze near the middle, from which a rope ladder dropped to the water’s surface, sat Wallie Moogers, swinging contentedly to and fro.

Penny laughed happily. The tank, with its water churned into foam by the many splashing swimmers, looked wonderfully cool and inviting; and the promise of a brisk game of tag, with chases that might lead from end to end, and up and off the diving-board, and down the chute, and over the trapeze, made the boy’s eyes sparkle in anticipation of the fun. Down in his heart, moreover, Wayne was proud of his aquatic skill.

He hesitated a moment, searching among the bobbing heads below him until he found one that was moving rapidly enough to put him to the test. Toward this he dived suddenly, cleaving the water with his hands above his head, and going

beneath the surface with hardly a ripple to mark his passage. When he came up again, in the middle of the tank, the swimmer whom he had marked was five yards away, propelling himself rapidly with a side-stroke that permitted a full view of his pursuer. Penny promptly gave chase.

He began with the breast-stroke, but finding he was losing rather than gaining shifted to the over-hand. Even with this graceful movement, that sent him along with the speed of a fish, he seemed unable to close the gap between the scurrying swimmer and himself. It was not until the end of the tank was reached, however, that he admitted to himself he had met his match. There the other scrambled up the steps to the marble platform, waited until Wayne was reaching out a hand for the stairway, and then dived cleanly over his head back into the water behind him.

Attempting to catch him now was folly; the dive had carried him ten yards away before the freshman could turn. From the trapeze came Moogers' shout of derision. Penny climbed from the water, and edged carelessly along the side of the landing, jumping suddenly for the rope ladder below Wallie. Before the good-natured giant

could snatch it out of reach, Wayne had it in his hand and was climbing rapidly. Moogers tried to dive, but the swinging bar upon which he was perched offered no stable foundation for his feet, and he dropped sprawling into the water, like some great Newfoundland dog. As he rose to the surface, spluttering and coughing, Penny touched his shoulder.

“You’re it, Wallie Moogers,” he laughed.

The big fellow turned reproachful eyes upon him. “Why pick on me?” he demanded. “I don’t see why you couldn’t have kept trailing Phil Elton. That would have been real sport.”

“Who is he?” asked Wayne.

“Oh, nobody much: only the hundred-yard champion of this part of the world, that’s all. You were after him a minute ago — quite a ways after him, though!”

Moogers climbed a stairway to the marble edge of the tank, and squatted down, daring the more active and faster swimmers to come near him. Twice he dived suddenly, and twice roars of laughter proclaimed his clumsy misses. But in the end he tagged a careless loiterer, who sank beneath the surface a second too late to avoid the fat boy’s lunge. Curiously enough, this proved to be Elton,

the last fellow in the tank one would expect to be caught napping.

Before that swimmer called out a warning that he was after Wayne, the boy had guessed as much. This time the advantage was his, for it is easier in the water to evade than it is to catch. He accepted the challenge by surging down the tank with an overhand stroke, allowing his head to go beneath the surface with each dip of either arm, and drawing in rapid breaths as he rolled from side to side. Once he glanced back, only to discover Elton cutting the water behind as a speed-boat might do. After that, he concentrated every ounce of leg and arm and shoulder muscle, and every thought, upon reaching the ladder at the end before his pursuer had closed in on him.

He succeeded easily. He had grasped it, indeed, and scrambled to the top step before the other was at its foot. Profiting by his earlier experience, he doubled back into the tank by diving over Elton's head. But the champion, counting upon this, kicked away from the stairway with a mighty leg-thrust that shot him far out. When Penny, therefore, after swimming under water for some yards, ventured to the surface, the other was almost upon him.

But as he reached to tag, the freshman swerved suddenly and escaped, sinking into the deep water without a second's hesitation. Here he reversed his direction, and passed beneath a dark shadow that must have marked the position of Elton, floating on the surface. When he emerged again, it was back at the stairway he had just deserted.

This time he climbed hurriedly to the top, and raced along the platform. The other followed an instant later, like a tardy shadow. Many of the swimmers had stopped to watch this friendly test of skill, and a number of students in street clothes had drifted into the room and were standing along the sides, enjoying the fun.

The race grew more exciting. Penny dived, swam across the tank, dived again, doubled under water, and raced along on the marble footpath. He climbed the long chute, waited until Elton was almost upon him, and slid down its long incline. As he drifted under the trapeze, he caught the rope ladder and pulled himself up to the bar, dropping off feet-first as his pursuer unconsciously steadied the swinging ropes by holding fast to the bottom rung. A moment later, he dived from the spring-board at one end, going almost straight down, and came up in its very shadow, to laugh

heartily at the chagrin of Elton, out near the middle of the tank. A burst of applause greeted this maneuver.

After a bit, however, Wayne began to tire. The unnatural exercise of the afternoon was beginning to manifest itself in aching muscles and protesting heart and lungs. He swam now with a great effort, and his diving was no longer clean-cut. As the other appeared equally weary, they took to scampering about on the marble bank that skirted the water, dipping into the tank only when the stern necessities of the chase demanded.

Now, wet marble offers a treacherous foothold, as Penny presently discovered. He had climbed out at the side facing the door, and some foolish impulse tempted him to dodge back of a little group of spectators who stood there. As he circled in behind them, the slippery surface proved his undoing. His feet shot from under him, and he lunged involuntarily toward the tank, crashing full-force into somebody in street clothes who unhappily barred his way. Together the two of them slid to the brink of the great bowl, unable to stay their progress, and toppled gently over its edge into the water below.

A dozen willing hands fished out the drenched

spectator. Almost before Wayne realized what he had done, the victim of the accident was up on the platform, peering down at the boy. It was Dad Lubbock!

There followed an awful pause. The freshman could think of nothing to say by way of extenuation, and the coach, after gulping uncertainly once or twice, smoothed his face into its emotionless expression, and pressed his lips hard together. Over at one side, Wallie Moogers giggled foolishly.

Presently Dad Lubbock spoke.

"Candidates for the football team, Wayne," he observed evenly, "are not supposed to use the swimming-tank. Kindly remember that in the future."

Then he turned about abruptly, and stalked out of the room. As the door closed after him, Wallie Moogers touched Penny with his hand.

"You're it, Penny Penfield," he said.

CHAPTER VI

THE CLASS ELECTION

SICK at heart, Wayne found his way to his locker and dressed as quickly as he could. But when he had walked forth from the gymnasium, leaving behind the damp, steamy atmosphere of the baths, and had breathed deep draughts of the crisp, clean air outside, his head cleared and his spirits revived. After he had marched twice around the block, indeed, he was smiling again, and his step was as buoyant as it had ever been. He forgot his petty troubles. He ceased to worry about Dad Lubbock's state of mind toward him. He — why, of course that accounted for the queer feeling at the pit of his stomach — he was hungry, ravenously hungry.

He turned the corner of the Historical Library, and broke into an easy trot across the lower campus toward his boarding-house. After he had burst into the hallway, with a great slamming of doors that brought Mrs. Pillsbury's startled face

into view from the neighborhood of the kitchen, he panted himself into a calmer state of lungs, and walked into the dining-room. At the second table sat Moogers and Eidenfessel, talking together in low tones.

He dropped easily into a vacant chair at their left. "Yes, I'll take some soup," he told the waitress. Then he looked hard at Moogers' set face. "What's the matter, Wallie? Lost all your money?"

There was a full minute of silence before the other deigned to answer. When he did, he turned to face Wayne, looking him full in the eyes. "No," he said slowly, "I haven't lost any money. It's worse than that. I've lost a friend."

The very tone was an accusation. Wayne stared hard at the tablecloth, noting the damp indentation left by his water-glass. The circular crease leered at him like a human eye, and he smoothed the linen with his little finger.

"I—I don't understand what you mean, Moogers."

"Don't you?" the big fellow asked unbelievably. "Well, perhaps if you live long enough, you will. . . . Come on, Eidenfessel, aren't you nearly through eating?"

The German boy looked at Wayne as he answered. "No," he said, "I am not through yet, but I think I go already. It is close here — now. It is hard for me to make a good breath."

Penny felt the blood rush to his face, flooding it with crimson, and then retreat, leaving him cold and white. As he leaned back in his chair, the others rose and walked to the door. A sudden distaste for food seized the boy at the table.

"I am not hungry," he apologized, as the hot soup was placed before him; "no, I am not hungry. I — I don't believe I can eat anything to-night."

He rose quickly, jerked his cap from the hall-rack, and rushed out after his friends. When he caught up with them, they were almost at the corner.

"Well?" said Moogers, unsmiling.

"What's the matter, Wallie? What have I done? What's happened since I left you in the gymnasium?"

"It happened before that," put in Eidenfessel; "before you asked me to play football, yes." He clicked his heels together and threw back his shoulders. "You — you are a traitor, Mr. Wayne."

Penny tried to speak, but a sudden lump in his throat choked back the denial. Moogers looked to right and left for possible eavesdroppers, and, finding none, raised his voice.

"Yesterday afternoon," he confessed, "I liked you immensely. This afternoon, in the swimming-tank, I liked you, too. But after this, you are not my friend."

"But why?" persisted Penny. "What's happened?"

"You know well enough," accused Moogers, very distressed and yet very earnest. His forehead was wrinkled with myriad little lines, and his heavy face looked more serious than the boy had ever seen it before. "Skidmore, the sophomore, comes from my town. He told me that when some of his class went to your room early this afternoon, and asked where the cardinal cap was hidden, you told them. Did you?"

Penny wriggled uncomfortably. "They — they were going to keep me away from football practice."

"Did you tell?"

"Well, what if I did? Who had a better right? I won the cap for the freshmen, didn't I? If I liked, I had a perfect right to give it back. Why not?"

“ ‘Why not?’ ” repeated Moogers, looking away and speaking with what seemed an effort. “ I’ll tell you why not. Because it wasn’t yours to give. You went into the rush yesterday, not for yourself, but for your class. It was never your cap; it belonged to the whole class — to Eidenfessel here, and to Terwilliger, and to me, and to every other freshman at Wellworth. And when you told where it was hidden, you parted with a secret that was ours to keep, not yours alone.”

“ That is right, exactly,” assented Eidenfessel, nodding vigorously.

To Penny, this was the culmination of the sore trials of the day. What was infinitely worse, he was beginning to realize the logic of his classmate’s arguments. He had acted hastily, perhaps, and without considering the greater issue, but —

“ If I hadn’t told,” he protested weakly, “ I should have missed the football practice.”

“ What of it? ” demanded Moogers. “ Does your individual ambition overshadow everything else? Must the freshman class be sacrificed that you may gain your end? Suppose they came again tomorrow; would you offer them Mrs. Pillsbury’s furniture as a bribe to let you escape? ”

Penny dug his hands into his pockets, and stared

dully across the street. Before he spoke, he blinked uncertainly.

"I—I didn't understand," he said in a low voice. "Does everybody know what I did?"

"Not yet," admitted Moogers. "Skidmore wouldn't have told even me if I hadn't overheard him talking about it to another sophomore. I think they are a little disappointed in you, even if they did get the information they wanted. I suppose Eidenfessel and I are the only freshmen who have heard of it."

With great difficulty, Penny swallowed the lump in his throat. He looked silently at Moogers for a moment, and then turned away. But he had gone only a few yards when the big fellow caught his sleeve.

"Wayne," he offered, "I suppose there are two sides to the story, just as there are to every one. I am willing to concede that you made it possible for us to win the cap yesterday. That's in your favor. It is possible, too, that you didn't fully realize the significance of what you were doing to-day when you told where Terwilliger had gone to hide it. I know the fellows are going to put you up for president of the class at the meeting to-

night, and it is almost a certainty that you will be elected if this story doesn't come out."

Penny turned a drawn face to Moogers. "I'd almost forgotten about the class meeting. Where is it to be held?"

"Room 16, Main Hall," said Moogers. "I won't mention this affair. I can keep a secret even if you can't." And he darted back to Eidenfessel's side.

For several minutes Penny stood on the corner undecided. A dozen plans raced through his brain. He even thought of taking what money he had left and buying a ticket back home. But he brushed aside the thought as cowardly; he must face the consequences, whatever they might be. Perhaps, after all, everything would come out all right.

Presently he turned toward the upper campus, and climbed the hill toward Main Hall. What had he done, anyhow, that was so awful? Big Moogers was a ~~sent~~imentalist. His class wouldn't care much whether the sophomores took the cap or not. Certainly, it couldn't require him to miss football practice on that account, just for a piece of leather. He was his own master. If the bulk of the class ever learned of the episode, it

must understand his point of view. Why, of course!

By the time he had reached the building, he was once more in a sunny frame of mind which carried him jauntily past the fellows at the door and up to a seat near the front of the great lecture-room. All about him were the fellows who had followed him to victory the day before. As he sat down somebody called, "What's the matter with Penny Penfield?" and the whole room volleyed back, "He's all right!"

Wee Willie Winkle, whom he had left in the tank two hours earlier, squeezed into a seat by his side. Instinctively, Wayne shrank back, fearing that the country lad had heard the story, and might misconstrue it. But his fear was unfounded.

"Feeling all right, they tell me," he greeted.

"Pretty good, thank you."

"Well, don't get tired too early. We may need you up there on the platform before the evening is over."

As the room filled, the confusion bloomed into an uproar. But when a clock outside struck seven, the noise subsided and Oskison took his place on the rostrum.

"Fellows," he began, "I have been asked to

call the meeting to order. The first thing to do, I believe, is to effect a permanent organization. Consequently, nominations for class president are now in order."

There was a moment of dead silence. Then, before the buzzing could begin anew, Wee Willie Winkle was on his feet.

"Fellow members of the class," he began, "we are just starting out in the world, and it is imperative that our first step be right. For this reason, it is highly important that we elect a strong, a courageous, and a popular president to lead us for the first few months of our history. There are doubtless many among us who are worthy of the office, but because we are a new class, an untried class, we are not in a position to recognize them all. But there is one among us who has proved his caliber by making it possible for the freshmen to occupy the unique prestige of having won the cap rush. I nominate Penfield Wayne."

Instantly a flood of cheers swept the room. It rose again and again, echoing and re-echoing till it became a continuous roar of approval. Those nearest the boy tried to hoist him on their shoulders, but he fought them off with laughing resistance. Oskison rapped on the table with his hand

until it hurt, but the class would not come to order.

"Penny Penfield! Penny Penfield!" they chanted deliriously.

Although it seemed the turmoil would never quiet, Oskison eventually managed to make himself heard. "Mr. Penfield Wayne has been nominated for president. Are there any further nominations?"

There was no response.

"If not," continued Oskison, "we must ballot on the one name."

As he paused, some of the more impatient cried, "Vote! Question! Give us the question!"

"All those in favor —"

From the back of the room came a mighty crash. Moved by a common impulse, the class turned quickly in its seats, as if fearing a sophomore invasion. In response to the thunderous knocking, the door-keepers swung back the portals a crack, and then, with a murmur of genuine astonishment, flung them wide to admit a wet, mud-streaked figure. It was Terwilliger.

Straight to the platform he marched, looking neither to right nor left. As he held up a hand, the freshmen stilled in sudden apprehension.

"Fellows," he shouted hoarsely, "the cardinal cap is gone. The sophomores have it. I did my best, but they caught me and captured it. Now, we must wear green caps, every one of us."

He paused expectantly. A groan of dismay swept through the meeting.

"Why didn't you take care of it?" demanded a voice from the rear.

"I did," yelled Terwilliger angrily. "But there was another freshman who failed us. The sophomores went to him, and he told them where I was hiding it. Told the sophomores! Do you understand?"

A storm of questions poured forth from every point in the crowded room. Half the class leaped to its feet.

"Who was it that told?"

"Who is he?"

"Who? Who? Tell us!"

"Yes, I'll tell you," said Terwilliger grimly.

"It was Penny Wayne."

The storm died out as suddenly as it had arisen. By the side of the accused boy, Wee Willie Winkle turned to him unbelievably.

"That's not true, Wayne; is it?"

Penny rose to his feet, and faced the great mass of freshmen behind him.

“What Terwilliger has said is true,” he admitted, intending to explain the whole circumstance, “only —” He stumbled awkwardly; it was difficult to put the argument in words. “It is true,” he began once more, “only —” He moistened his lips, and made a third attempt, to discover, without warning, that he had nothing to say in his own behalf. He sank back into his seat.

The tumult broke out afresh. Winkle arose and offered to withdraw the nomination, but Oskison ruled against such a procedure. “It may be better,” he pointed out, “to allow him to discover what the class thinks of fellows of his selfish stripe.”

In the end, somebody nominated Oskison himself, and the class was invited to vote upon the two.

“I find,” announced Terwilliger, who had been chosen to conduct the balloting, “that of the two hundred and forty-seven votes cast, two hundred and forty-six are for Mr. Oskison and one for Mr. Wayne. Mr. Oskison did not vote; Mr. Wayne did. The inference is obvious.”

A gale of laughter swept over the meeting.

Penny rose with clenched fists to deny the intimation, but the class would not listen. Then followed the election of the other officers, through which the boy sat motionless, staring straight ahead. When it was nearly over, Winkle touched his coat sleeve.

“Penny,” he said, “I know you didn’t cast that one vote for yourself. It was mine. I couldn’t make myself believe what you confessed. I had come to count upon you, boy, and to want you for a friend, because I thought you were working for all of us.”

Wayne winced as if he had been struck. Of all he had endured that night, these words hurt most. Later, in his room, he fell into a troubled sleep still thinking of them.

CHAPTER VII

THE TRICK PLAY

IN the days that followed, Wayne sought consolation in diligent study and in determined football practice. His former freshmen friends took pains to avoid him, ignoring him as completely as they could. This treatment hurt more than he cared to admit, even to himself; but it was as nothing compared to the attitude of Dad Lubbock.

By the end of the first week of football practice, the boy was firmly convinced that the coach had no intention of trying him out with the varsity team. Like the others, he was in league against the freshman. Each afternoon Wayne reported for play, buoyed with new hope and eager to prove his ability at quarter-back for the first eleven; and each afternoon Dad Lubbock relegated him to the scrubs, who were supposed to serve merely that the other team might enjoy actual scrimmages. Against them, the coach hurled the varsity, battering incessantly upon the line, or circling the

ends, until the backs moved with the precision and the irresistible heartlessness of a machine. This he termed drilling the first eleven in offense.

Afterwards, when the scrubs were given the ball, and Wayne was searching his mind for strategic plays to even the score, Dad Lubbock would call, "Send your right-half between tackle and guard, Quarter;" and the varsity, being duly forewarned, would mass its whole strength to meet the attack, and would topple them over backward for a loss. Generally, it was Eidenfessel who was at right-half for the scrubs. Whether there was friction between him and Penny, or whether the fault was the German boy's, even Wayne himself could not determine. Certain it was, however, that the resultant plunge was feeble and shrinking, and often necessitated a repetition by order of Dad Lubbock, who scowled and criticized freely. This incessant line-bucking the coach called building up a defense for the varsity.

But on Tuesday of the second week, when Penny's every ragged nerve was protesting, Dad Lubbock unexpectedly called him over where the first eleven was awaiting its instructions, and said:

"Go in at quarter, Wayne, and let's see what

you can do. We need to run through a few signals."

The freshman nodded happily, and leaped into position.

"Line up, fellows!" he called with shrill insistence.

Because it was the first signal that came to mind, he began with an end-run. As the center snapped the ball to him, the whole line surged forward, the backs circled suddenly to the right, and the left half fairly tore the ball from his hands. Bewildered by the speed and precision of the play, which were qualities the second eleven had not fully mastered, Wayne hesitated for a single moment. Behind him the coach voiced his disapproval.

"Here! Here! That won't do at all. Quarter, you are supposed to help form the interference, and not to stand back and enjoy the play. Get into it the instant you pass the ball. Try that again."

This time the play ran more smoothly, but Wayne, in his eagerness to fit into the interference, moved too erratically. Once more the coach's strident complaint rang out.

"Quarter, you're clogging the runner's path now. He'll trip over you if he isn't careful. Look

alive! Let's have the same thing again. Now, up and away as if you meant it, varsity!"

And so they tried it the third time, and the fourth, and, after Dad Lubbock had made clear his theory by going in at quarter-back himself, a fifth time. Wayne was breathing hard, and not wholly pleased with his own playing, although he told himself bitterly that the coach was singling him out for unwarranted criticism.

For fifteen long and weary minutes, the team tore up and down the field in signal practice. There was no pause for rest, no cessation of the quick lining-up and the equally quick running off of the play, and — what irritated Wayne most of all — no lessening of Dad Lubbock's sharp criticisms. Playing on the first eleven, even when it was not facing an opponent, called for a mental and a physical activity far beyond anything the boy had imagined.

After that, the coach beckoned to the scrubs, and the two teams lined up, with the varsity having the ball. Now the task became doubly exacting; now an error, or even a slight hesitation, meant more than it had in signal practice. Before there was a chance to recover and begin the play anew, the other eleven would be swarming through

the line and burying the quarter-back beneath its tangle of bodies and arms and legs.

Knowing this, Wayne faltered at the very outset. Parker, his right half-back, charged straight ahead in a line-buck, missed the ball, which the freshman was juggling uncertainly, and the scrubs hurled them back for a loss of five yards. Two minutes later, when the center chugged back the pigskin with unusual force, it eluded the boy's first frantic clutch altogether. This time the disaster was more serious in its results; for Eidenfessel, of the second eleven, snatched it from his very hands with a triumphant chuckle, and raced half the length of the field for a touchdown. As Wayne emerged from the group of players that had tumbled upon him, he heard Dad Lubbock uttering bitter sarcasm over the fumble.

As might have been expected, the quarter-back lost his head completely after that, and the coach did the kindest thing possible under the circumstances by putting little Jarvis in his place and retiring Wayne to the side-lines. But the freshman, broken-hearted over his lost opportunity, did not understand why he had been taken out. He lapsed promptly into his former mood of sullen martyrdom.

All this was on Tuesday. Before he reported for practice on Wednesday afternoon, Wayne had evolved a new method of forcing his way into the good graces of Dad Lubbock. For whatever the coach might think, the boy was confident that with a fair trial he could win the coveted position of quarter-back on the varsity.

This new method was nothing more nor less than the completion of a trick play upon which he had been toiling for days. Somewhat to Penny's surprise, Dad Lubbock not only greeted him with every evidence of friendliness, but listened patiently while the boy explained the details of the plan, which he had elucidated with a diagram showing exactly the evolution each player must follow to carry it through to a successful culmination. The coach was frankly interested.

"It has undoubted promise, Wayne," he admitted, "and there'll be no harm in testing it against the scrubs. Yes, I'll give it a trial at once. Let's see, the quarter-back eventually takes the ball, doesn't he? Well, suppose you show the varsity team how the formation goes by playing quarter for a while."

Wayne nodded smilingly. He had achieved his ambition. He had practically compelled Dad Lub-

bock to shift him from the second to the first eleven; and, once the brilliancy of the trick play had been demonstrated, the coach could hardly overlook him in the future. It was a long step toward the desired privilege of playing quarterback regularly.

The play was numbered 13 in the signals. The system in calling them was to add the first two numerals for the key to the ensuing formation, which permitted of varying them enough to confuse any opposing team.

After they had drilled themselves for a time with signal practice, the varsity players lined up against the unsuspecting scrubs. Following the coach's instructions, Wayne began with a line plunge, handling the ball cleanly, and fitting exactly into his niche of the interference. Next he sent Parker, the right-half, circling around the end for a substantial gain, protecting him for yards by fending off ambitious tacklers. Once more the two teams crouched.

"6-7-1-5," called Wayne, his voice breaking a little in spite of every effort to keep it clear and steady. It was the signal for the trick play.

The ball thudded into his hands. From the extreme right, little Kern, the end, came dashing in

- behind him. The whole scrub line swayed instinctively in the direction the runner was following. To further the trick, the varsity backs swept in ahead of him as if to form a pocket in which he might be secure from tacklers. Wayne himself stepped sharply back, and then raced in the opposite direction, forging forward until he was even with the line of scrimmage. Here he turned to receive the long throw.

Kern, securely protected by the interference, sent the ball hurtling end over end toward him. For a moment, in which Wayne's heart seemed to stop beating, it promised to travel straight and true into his very arms. But just as he was telling himself excitedly that the trick had proved a success, Eidenfessel, well back of the struggling mass, thrust up a blocking hand and deflected the course of the flying leather. There was a second of inactivity; then twenty players were in full cry after the fumbled ball, like wolves hard upon their prey.

Little Jarvis, playing quarter-back for the scrubs, reached it first, gauged nicely its bound, and gathering it in with a whoop of joy raced forty yards for a touchdown.

After the goal line had been crossed, and the coach had carried the ball back to the middle of the

field for further scrimmaging, Wayne turned a disappointed face toward him.

"It was an accident, Dad," he cried; "you saw that. Eidenfessel should have been backing his line instead of waiting where he was."

"Yes," agreed the coach, pressing his lips together, "he should."

"And if he had been, the play would have succeeded," explained Penny eagerly. "Why, it would go through nine times out of ten."

"How about the tenth time?" asked Dad Lubbock quietly. "We must count upon the occasional failure, you know. No, we will discard it."

Wayne flushed painfully. "But you haven't given it a fair trial," he protested.

"I don't agree with you," said the coach, still quietly, but with such a note of finality in his voice that the freshman turned away quickly to hide his quivering lips. "If it succeeded, it would appear a brilliant play; but every time it fails — and you admit yourself that it must inevitably fail now and then — it means almost a sure touchdown for the opposing team, because it leaves us absolutely no protection against their runner. That is quite enough to warrant our discarding it."

"But, Dad, you —"

The coach turned away abruptly, as if he had not heard. None of the players offered a protest; none suggested trying the trick again. The freshman swallowed uncertainly, and blinked rapidly to hold back the tears of disappointment that were very near the surface.

“Line up, varsity,” commanded Dad Lubbock; “line up, scrubs. Varsity’s ball, first down. Jarvis, you take Wayne’s place at quarter. Martin will substitute for you on the scrubs. Now, let’s see if we can’t put more ginger into these straight plays.”

Apparently quite forgotten by both coach and players, Penny Wayne watched dully as the two teams faced each other and the monotonous drill began anew. After a minute or two, when there seemed no further reason for his standing idly on the side-lines, he asked Dad Lubbock if he might run to the gymnasium now and take his shower baths.

“Certainly not,” said the coach sharply. Then, as he caught a glimpse of the boy’s hurt face, he continued kindly, “We are going to try some delayed and double passes presently, and possibly a ‘fake’ kick or two; I want you to get the signals and study the formations.”

Before he had time to think, Wayne blurted out a question that sounded distressingly inane and humble after he had spoken.

"Then you are going to give me another chance at quarter-back sometime?" he asked.

Dad Lubbock looked at him quizzically. "Why, certainly," he smiled. "If it is at all possible, you will go in the first game on Saturday for a few minutes."

After that, of course, wild horses could not have dragged the freshman from the practice. He even began to wonder if he had not misjudged the coach a little; and he trotted along by his side as the man followed the struggling teams up and down the field. More than once, indeed, so closely did he analyze each move, that he found himself able to predict with remarkable accuracy the criticisms which Dad Lubbock heaped impartially upon the players before him.

Finally, as if this were not stimulus enough to restore his optimistic nature, his very heart sang a paeon of joy as the scrubs, in possession of the ball near the end of the period, were not only foolish enough to attempt a slight variation of the very trick play the varsity had foisted unsuccessfully upon them — *his* play — but were also lucky

enough to carry it through for a thirty-yard gain. Everybody on the side-lines laughed uproariously over the chagrin of the first eleven. Wayne himself could not forbear asking Dad Lubbock slyly if he hadn't better reconsider his decision to discard it, which of course was about the most tactless remark a freshman candidate could possibly make to a football coach.

Dad Lubbock's answer was to the squad as a whole.

"The trick play we have watched," he told them, "has its merits. On the whole, however, its dangers more than offset its possibilities. For this reason, it is not to be attempted in any real game, and we cannot afford to waste time over it in practice. It is to be permanently discarded. You all understand?"

Every head bobbed obediently, save Wayne's. The freshman dug the toe of his cleated shoe in the turf, and nervously clasped and unclasped his moist hands. Parker, the captain, who had taken a liking to the little freshman, stared at him curiously. There was an awkward silence, which Dad Lubbock seemed not to notice.

"That's all today," the coach said quietly. "Practice tomorrow at the usual hour. Run in."

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST GAME

BEFORE it was fairly light on Saturday morning, Penny Wayne was out of bed and at the window, gazing happily upon the cloudless sky that promised a clear day for the first game. As he stood there, the sun crept slowly above the rim of the horizon and threw its warm rays upon his face. The boy laughed happily.

“Listen, Mr. Sun,” he said, “this afternoon I am going to play for a while — and I am going to prove to Dad Lubbock that I have brains enough and brawn enough and courage enough to make the team. You’ll see!”

As he dressed, he whistled softly and contentedly to himself. And all the long forenoon, and until it was time to report at the gymnasium, he lounged about in his room, as the coach had advised, smiling a little foolishly and waiting — waiting. For with every tick of the clock, Opportunity was coming closer.

How the time passed, he could not have told. But eventually he found himself at Camp Randall with the others of the squad, watching the two teams engaged in a preliminary signal practice, which presently ended. An official tossed a coin high in the air, and Parker won the toss. As he squatted down on the side-lines with the other substitutes, looking like an Indian in his cardinal sweater, which he hung loosely over his back, with the sleeves tied about his neck, the freshman drew in a deep breath.

This first struggle was against Carlton College, a small denominational institution in the north of the State, which began its football practice a week or two before any other school, and which for this reason often proved a stumbling-block during the earlier part of the season. Parker elected that its team should kick off to Wellworth, and the two opposing elevens scattered themselves over the field in their proper positions. An official raised his hand.

“Are you ready?” he asked.

All at once, Wayne's heart began to pound furiously. For a tense moment, the small crowd in grandstand and bleachers went silent. Then, as clear and distinct as a rifle-shot, came the thud of

the kicker's toe against the ball. The sound was the signal for action. The two teams closed in on each other, and the game was on.

Parker caught the ball on the kick-off, and charged back ten yards before he was downed. As the whistle shrilled the end of the scrimmage, Wayne found himself standing up, shaking with excitement, and promptly sank back to the ground. He was a little ashamed of his emotion, and turned to see if his action had been observed. Yes, Dad Lubbock, at his side, was staring at him, with a little pucker above his nose, just as he did on practice days over some play.

As the teams lined up, Jarvis' signal rang out sharply.

“8-3-6-4.”

Eight and three; that was eleven. Jarvis was sending Lakers, the full-back, between guard and tackle on the right wing of the opposing line. Wayne nodded in appreciation of the quarterback's wisdom. Whether the play resulted in a gain or not, a line-rush would serve to instil confidence in handling the ball cleanly, and pave the way for the more dangerous end-runs and cross-bucks. Why, Jarvis wasn't such a poor quarter, after all, only — Well, Wayne would have his

chance later; then he would show what *he* could do.

The first play netted two yards. Jarvis tried the other side of the line without gain. Then, so rapidly that the Carlton team had scarcely time to brace, the quarter rattled off another signal, and Parker was around the end and twenty yards down the field before the enemy had solved the intricacies of the double-pass. He was downed far to one side; here the elevens lined up again.

“3-4-4-3,” called Jarvis.

Wayne whirled suddenly to the coach. “Why, that’s a line-plunge, Dad,” he protested. “That’s wrong, isn’t it? Why doesn’t he call for an end-run toward the center of the field?”

The coach turned weary eyes upon him. “Because it would be too obvious to Carlton,” he answered shortly. “No team ever tries it when it is in that position. Use your head, boy; no quarterback who doesn’t reason for himself can succeed.”

Wayne felt suddenly sobered. After he had considered the problem a minute, however, he admitted that Dad Lubbock was quite right. He hoped, down in his heart, that the coach would forget his blunder, and he determined to prove

that he could think clearly when Dad gave him the opportunity to play.

Jarvis finished out the first quarter and began the second. Neither team could gain consistently, and time after time, following three futile attempts at line-bucking and skirting the ends, the ball changed hands by means of long punts that carried it out of striking distance of one goal or the other. Wellworth had the heavier eleven, but this advantage was offset by the week or more of extra practice the Carlton players had enjoyed. Dad Lubbock's team played raggedly, giving the impression of great strength once it had been moulded into a smooth-moving machine, but proving erratic and unsteady in the present crisis.

Now and then the coach substituted players from the side-lines for those who had begun the game. When Jarvis retired in the middle of the second period, Wayne waited anxiously for Dad Lubbock to tell him his chance had come. But, to his great disappointment, little Vinney was sent out to play quarter-back. Wayne was honest enough to admit that the youngster ran the team intelligently, if not brilliantly; but he was confident that he could do as well himself. He began to wonder if the coach was treating him fairly.

The half ended without scoring. During the ten minutes of rest, Dad Lubbock offered little advice to his players, beyond telling them to be more alert on defense.

"A no-score tie won't matter much, one way or the other," he said, "but we must not be beaten."

To Wayne this savored of something almost akin to treason. Why, of course, they must not be beaten; and yet a tie was an outcome nearly as tragic. Why didn't Dad Lubbock implore them to go in and play their very hearts out, and take desperate chances, and run the Carlton eleven off its feet? He had always understood that a college coach spent the time between halves in begging his team, with tears in his eyes, to win or to die fighting. Penny Wayne had much to learn.

The second half began with Vinney still at quarter. After five or six minutes, however, Dad called him to the side-lines, and put in Martin. Wayne moved angrily when he heard the name. Even if he were to be the victim of the coach's scheme of petty revenge, the man might have selected somebody else. Martin was too light, and too rattle-brained, to make a good quarter-back.

Just as he had expected, the substitute mixed his signals on the very first play. At Wayne's side,

the coach squirmed uneasily. A second later, Martin erred seriously in judgment in calling for an end-run just as it seemed the Wellworth backs had discovered a weak place in the opposing line. But Dad Lubbock said nothing, and, worse still, did nothing.

Afterward, when Martin was doing better, with growing confidence, Wayne began to understand why he had not been taken out at once. But with this recognition of the fact that the quarter-back's first errors were due simply to nervousness that was fast wearing off, the freshman's anger toward the coach increased rather than decreased. If he had stopped to analyze his emotions, he would have known that this was due to an increasing fear that Martin might be allowed to finish the game and thus deprive him of his own opportunity, rather than to any logical criticism of Dad Lubbock's wisdom in allowing the other to work out his own salvation. But by this time, Wayne was past the stage of calm reasoning with himself. He wanted to play. Nothing else was of any importance. He must play!

The final quarter began with the two teams still struggling in a no-score tie that seemed destined to exist to the final whistle. At the end of five

minutes, the ball was in the exact center of the field. A little later, it had been carried twenty yards into Wellworth territory, but at the end of another sixty seconds it was back on Carlton's thirty-yard line. Neither could advance it beyond these points.

And then, when Wayne had settled down in moody admission of the power of Dad Lubbock to deprive him of his chance to prove his skill out there on the white-ribbed field, the coach turned to him without warning.

"All right, Wayne," the man said quietly. "You can take Martin's place now."

Before he could say more, the freshman was running out to meet the advancing captain, with every nerve twitching his cold skin, and his heart almost standing still. Parker put a heavy arm around his shoulders, and whispered gruffly in his ear.

"It's our ball, Wayne; first down. We're all tired, but we won't quit. We're willing enough to follow, but we can't lead any more. We need a fresh, commanding mind; you've got it. That's all."

The freshman quarter-back nodded. Even as his chin lowered, his brain cleared rapidly, and his topsy-turvy world tilted back to normal. Once

more a steadying heart pumped warm blood through his chilled body, the lump in his throat dissolved into nothingness, and even the queer nausea of fear in the pit of his stomach was gone. Never had he felt so cool, so clear-headed, so calculating and strategic. He even laughed a little.

Eidenfessel replaced Okers at left half-back. When he was in position, Wayne spat out the signal, knelt suddenly to receive the ball from the center, and held it till the clutching arms of Lakers had clasped it, and the runner was crashing into the line. The vortex of surging players sucked Wayne into its midst, but even as he went down he knew the full-back had failed to gain.

"What was the trouble, Lakers?" he asked, after he had untangled himself.

"Too slow, Penny," confessed the full-back; "I'm too tired, I guess."

The quarter-back said nothing. There was no denying the truth of Lakers' statement. Well, he'd give Parker a trial.

But Parker, too, was downed before he had crossed the line of scrimmage. And the captain, like Lakers, answered Wayne's query with an apology for his plodding leg-weariness. "I'm dog-

tired; I can't seem to get moving quickly enough," he said simply.

The quarter-back turned a calculating eye upon Eidenfessel. He was fresh, at least. But the German's attempt was also a flat failure; he put into his plunge no life, no determination, no spurring joy of playing the game.

It was the fourth down, with nine yards to gain. There was only one logical play, and Wayne called for a punt, half-fearful that it might be blocked. But as he was surging forward with the linemen when the ball was lifted from the ground by the center, his ears caught the slight sound as it slapped into Parker's hands and the loud thump as the kicker sent it soaring, screwing its way through the air, high and far.

Ahead of him, as he ran, he saw one of the Carlton players set himself for the catch, with a quickly formed group gathering about him to act as interference. Even as the yellow ball dropped into the arms of the player, the freshman broke through and tackled fiercely, catching his opponent just above the knees and bringing him to earth before he had taken a forward step.

Up in the stands, they cheered frantically. A hoarse megaphone voice asked what was the mat-

ter with Wayne, and the crowd boomed back that he was all right! The sound warmed the cockles of the boy's heart as nothing else could have done.

As they lined up on defense, Parker asked the time. The official snapped open his watch.

"Five minutes to play!" he announced.

The captain motioned for Wayne to drop back toward their goal. "You're too light to be of any great help here on the line, and we can't take chances. Now, fellows, hold them!"

The freshman retreated to the center of the field. In front of him, the two teams crouched expectantly. Even from where he stood, Wayne could hear the high treble of the Carlton quarter as he called his signal, and could follow the course of the ball in the twisting, gyrating, bewildering play that resulted. It was a variation of the double-pass. But up there in the scrimmage zone, none of his own team seemed to divine the formation. They surged to the left, toward the point at which the runner had started. Over at the right a tackle and a back neatly boxed little Kern, the Wellworth end. There was a quick passing of the ball, a nimble reversal of attack — and a fleet player was through the demoralized left wing of the line, running clear in a free field.



The ball, wrenched loose from his opponent, bounded into his very arms. *Page 99.*

Wayne sprinted forward to meet him. The stands went silent again, stunned by the success of the play, and the freshman could hear his own choking breaths. If he missed the tackle, it meant a victory for the visitors.

As the runner neared him, he dodged suddenly, seeking to elude the lithe quarter-back. But Wayne was not to be denied. He tackled perfectly, felt his fingers slipping, clawed frantically for a hold, and after a moment of awful suspense realized that the runner was breaking away. Then, in a very ecstasy of determination, his right hand gripped a flap of loose canvas. He jerked with every ounce of power in his body.

The runner lost his balance and stopped — stopped so unexpectedly that Wayne's clinging fingers tore loose, and he dived head-first to the ground in front of the Carlton player. As he fell, he twisted to one side, however, and turned a complete somersault, landing on his feet, with his face toward the runner. And as he steadied himself for a second tackle, the ball, wrenched loose from his opponent by his first jerk, bounded into his very arms.

They downed him before he was fairly started, of course; but as he fell, with the precious ball held

fast, he heard the mad cheering of the Wellworth rooters in the stands, with his own name echoed again and again. He was fast becoming a hero. He was proving his right to a regular place on the varsity team. Now, if he could only prove his ability on offense!

The two teams lined up once more. It was Wellworth's ball on its own forty-yard line. To score, they must cover more than half of the field, and Wayne looked hopelessly over the vast distance with shaking head. He knew they could never do it in the minute or two that remained unless —

He knelt close behind the center, first assuring himself that his back-field was in position. Then he lifted his head, as if he were daring them to criticize, and snapped out:

"7-6-9-14." It was the call for the trick play they had discarded.

"Signal!" shouted Lakers, with a combination of doubt and admiration in his voice.

Wayne repeated it slowly.

"Signal!" This time it was Parker's unbelieving challenge.

The freshman quarter-back turned toward them, and reiterated the numbers, slowly, distinctly, aggressively.

“7-6-9-14.”

There was no mistaking it now. He held out his hands for the ball, and caught it deftly. From the right end of the line, little Kern circled back of him. Wayne made the pass to the runner with unerring certainty, and then dropped back and moved inconspicuously in the opposite direction. There was a tense second of apparent confusion, and then, hurtling straight through the struggling mass of players, came the yellow ball. Wayne held his breath in fear of some blocking arm or hand, but it sailed on without hindrance of any kind, and plumped true and hard against his breast.

He tucked it firmly into the pit of his arm, and closed a hand over its other pointed end, exulting as his biceps pressed firmly against its rough surface. Then he was away for the looming white goal-posts at the far end of the field, with only a single tackler between victory and himself, and with Parker already through the line, to act as interference.

It was so ridiculously easy that he experienced a sense of disappointment. As he neared the lone guardian near the goal, he slowed till Parker dropped in ahead and shouldered the tackler aside.

After that, of course, there was nothing to do but carry the ball behind the last white line and touch it to the ground between the two goal-posts. Intoxicated by the roaring appreciation of his sixty-yard run, he sat down upon the ball until the officials carried it out for the attempt at goal after the touchdown.

A minute later the game was over. Wellworth had won. Wayne had made the only touchdown and had been largely instrumental in preventing Carlton from scoring a few seconds before. No wonder they were cheering him, and tagging his name on the varsity yell as an appreciative snapper. He grinned delightedly as a megaphone begged:

“Now, fellows, three times three for the freshman, Penny Penfield — and make them loud! Now, all together, one, two, three!” And the very stands shook with the ensuing roar.

They carried him from the field on their shoulders, and they told him over and over what a wonderful player he was. He tried to belittle their praise, and to pretend that he had done no more than the others; but down in his heart, for all that, he was very proud of himself. It was this moment for which he had borne the rebuffs and the aches and pains of the practice days.

There was just one dissenting voice. Dad Lubbock looked at him very soberly, and shook his head doubtfully.

“I am sorry, Wayne,” he said, in his usual quiet way that might mean much or little, “that you disobeyed my instructions in trying that trick play.”

But the freshman could not understand that this meant adverse criticism or even a reprimand. He grinned back at the coach, and propounded the unanswerable question:

“Well, it was the play that won the game for us, wasn’t it?”

CHAPTER IX

THE BONFIRE CELEBRATION

It was not until he sat down at Mrs. Somer's dining table that night that Penfield Wayne realized how tired he was. Since the day after the class election, he had been taking his meals in a little house remote from the campus, with two seniors and a young instructor as table-mates. The board at Mrs. Pillsbury's, where he still roomed, was much better; but the boy could not eat there without coming in contact with the freshmen who had formerly been his friends.

To-night he was surprisingly hungry, however, and it took him long to finish his meal. After he was done, he wandered aimlessly out upon the porch, where the two seniors and the instructor were sitting. It was very inviting there, and for a time he talked with them about subjects in which he was not particularly interested. But he seemed choked with a loneliness that all the outdoors in the world could not dispel. He wanted friends; friends

of his own age, friends of his own class. No, more than that, he wanted particularly the friendship of big Moogers and serious Eidenfessel and talkative Terwilliger and great-hearted Winkle.

He lifted his head suddenly at the sound of a muffled boom. "Hello, what's that?" he asked wonderingly.

Dr. Lightner, the instructor, smiled. "Don't you know? Some enterprising youth is firing off the Civil War cannon near Main Hall. It is always done when the football team wins. They put a giant fire-cracker in the muzzle and touch it off."

A second explosion vibrated the air. The instructor stood up, and his eyes sparkled. He was a very young instructor.

"If I were in your place, Wayne," he said, "I should go down to the lower campus. After the first victory of the season, the freshmen are supposed to celebrate with a bonfire."

Penny stared uncertainly back into the hallway, where he could see the stairs that led to his room.

"Are all the freshmen expected to help?"

"It is considered a privilege," explained the instructor, thinking of his own student days. "Of course, as you are on the team, the other freshmen

will count upon your presence. It will prove capital sport, Wayne."

Penny reached for his hat. "Thank you," he said. "I am going."

Before he had covered the first block, he found himself only one of a small army that was issuing from boarding-houses and clubs on both sides of the street. All were bound for the lower campus, where the celebration was to be held. Occasionally, an upper-classman called the boy by name, but for the most part he seemed quite isolated from the college world.

In the second block, however, somebody overhauled him from behind, and fell into step with him. It was Wee Willie Winkle, with whom he had not talked since the night of the class election.

"How are you, Penfield?" greeted Winkle. "I hear we freshmen are about to build a bonfire. That will be good fun, won't it?"

"I don't know," confessed Wayne hesitatingly.

Wee Willie stole a glance at his dejected classmate. The sight of the boy's unhappy expression made his conscience twinge sharply.

"Why, of course, it will be good fun, Way—Penny! You just hang fast to my stout coat-tails, and I'll pull you through."

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A gentle warmth began somewhere under Penny's vest, and spread through his whole body. The wrinkles on his forehead smoothed out. The buoyancy of his stride carried him along on thin air. He turned an embarrassed face to Winkle.

"I — I do want to — to help the class this time," he said. The confession cost him a great effort, but he felt more than repaid when the other clapped a heavy hand on his shoulder.

"Why, of course," agreed the country boy. "You have been a little thoughtless, and perhaps a little selfish; but I know you're built of the right stuff."

Already a great crowd had gathered along the sides of the lower campus. Near the middle, the freshmen were collecting in a ragged group. At the end toward the Historical Library, very noisy and insistent that the bonfire should be lighted at once, was a solid wall of sophomores. Among them all wriggled small boys, apparently only a year or two out of baby dresses. As Winkle and Wayne pushed their way through the crowd, the second-year class began to chant:

"Bon-fire! Bon-fire!
We want the bon-fi-ire!"

By this time, Oskison, the freshman president, had been boosted shoulder-high by Moogers and Eidenfessel, and was addressing his class.

“Fellows, it is customary for the entering class to demonstrate its loyalty to Wellworth by celebrating the first victory of the football season with a big fire on the campus. Now, because we are the best class that ever came to the old school, we are going to build a bonfire that will make every preceding conflagration look like a one-candle-power electric light after the current stops. But it takes wood. We must all get wood. Now, the best thing —”

How he had intended to end the speech, they never knew. At this point, a blue-coated figure pushed its way to his side, and Moogers, suddenly startled at the apparition, allowed Oskison to drop ignominiously to the ground.

“It’s a policeman!” exclaimed Winkle. “He’s going to stop the whole celebration.”

But the officer had no such intention in mind. In fact, he was mild and apologetic.

“Boys,” he said, “I just want to give you a friendly warning. Every year after this fire, we have complaints from residents near here, who claim that their sidewalks and outbuildings have

been taken for fire-wood. This time the mayor has sent me down to protect property, and I am going to do it. If I find that you are burning anything that does not belong to you, I must take you in charge. That's all!"

As quietly as he had come, the policeman slipped away, leaving behind him a storm of protests. Terwilliger's voice rose loudest of all.

"It's an outrage," he shouted belligerently. "We will do just as we please. It's some kind of a trick to belittle our class."

Penny smiled. It was good to hear Terwilliger talk once more, and to discover him suspicious and personally offended, just as he always pretended to be. Wayne opened his mouth to offer a suggestion to Winkle, and then shut it again. Probably the class would not care to welcome any plan of his. But the idea was too good to let slip.

"Look, Wee Willie," he said, pointing to a building that stood alone in the middle of a big lot near the campus; "do you see that old barn that is tumbled-down and weather-beaten? It's an eyesore to those residences on either side. Now, suppose every man in the crowd contributed a dime toward its purchase: couldn't we buy it for our bonfire?"

The big, red-haired freshman slapped his leg. "Just the thing, Penny!" he shouted. "Oh, Oskison, ask the fellows what they think about this plan."

Once more the president was lifted to a pair of strong shoulders, and the idea was explained to the class. Instantly there was a roar of approval, with only Terwilliger objecting.

"I'll appoint Mr. Winkle to collect the money," concluded Oskison, before he slipped to the ground.

"And as long as it was your suggestion," smiled Wee Willie to Penny, "I'll appoint you as my assistant."

Wayne wanted to refuse. It was upon the tip of his tongue, indeed, to decline the offer; but a second's study showed him the cowardice of such action on his part. Accordingly, green cap in hand, he went from one member of the class to another, soliciting the dimes. It gratified him to observe that many of the fellows who had been bitterly against him ever since the night of the election now appeared to be making friendly overtures again. Evidently his success as a football player had redeemed, in a measure, the unfortunate mistake he had made at the beginning of the year.

"It totals \$24.90," said Oskison, as he com-

pleted the count. "I will put in another dime, and make it an even \$25.00. Now, unless there is an objection, I wish to appoint the same committee that collected the money to go and buy the building. We will stay here on the campus while you find out if the owner is willing to sell. If he is, call to us, and we will rush over and demolish it before his eyes in less than nothing flat."

Penny realized that the honor of appearing upon this committee was hardly his by right, but when he objected to Winkle the latter refused to listen.

"You come along with me, Penny Penfield," he commanded. "It was your idea. Just forget about that cap matter; lots of us do the wrong thing before we learn better."

The twilight had become night. Behind them, Penny gazed upon the dark mass of moving freshmen in the middle of the campus. To the left, the Historical Library twinkled lights at a half-hundred windows. Ahead, the old barn leaned totteringly upon uncertain rafters, apparently ready and even eager to fall apart and feed the coming bonfire.

"Don't look at it too hard," cautioned Wee Willie, "or it will collapse under the strain. Won-

der where old Jim Brown is. He owns the handsome structure, and somebody told me he lived next-door."

"Stop right where you are!"

At the command, the committee of two stepped back suddenly. A blinding flash of light played full upon them. At first, Penny imagined that an automobile had swung into the path ahead, but he discovered presently that the obstruction was only a man, carrying in his hand an old-fashioned bicycle lamp.

"Who are you?" The question was flung in their very faces. "Don't you know you are trespassing? You get off my property."

Winkle found his tongue first. "Is this Mr. Brown?" he inquired politely.

Obviously the owner of the gruff voice did not care to be pacified. "Yes, I'm Brown," he snarled, "old Jim Brown. You are a couple of university students come to steal my barn for your bonfire, I suppose. Well, you aren't the first ones who have tried it. Now, you get off —"

But Wee Willie was not to be discouraged thus easily. "One minute, Mr. Brown. We do want your barn, but we have no intention of stealing it. It is of no value to you, and you would have to pay

to have it carted away. Now, we are ready to tear it down and use the wood for our bonfire, and give you twenty-five dollars into the bargain."

The man was silent. As the light of the lantern revealed his face, Penny could see that it was working strangely.

"Twenty-five dollars," repeated Winkle, the practical.

"Boys" — the voice was less harsh this time — "boys, you are the first two who ever came here and treated me fairly. I've hated you college chaps because you haven't considered my feelings in the past. But now — well, I don't mind telling you that the barn is of no value to me; only this day the board of health condemned it. As far as I am concerned —" He broke off abruptly, and stopped to listen. The face wrinkled into a scowl; the voice dropped back into its surly snarl. "What's that? Who's singing that?"

From the wall of sophomores back on the campus came the words, to the tune of "John Brown's Body:"

"Jim Brown doesn't like the Universitee;
Jim Brown doesn't like the Universitee;
Jim Brown doesn't like the Universitee —
And we don't like Jim Brown!"

The old man stepped forward toward the two freshmen, shaking his fist. "There!" he cried, his voice hoarse with anger. "That's the way you boys treat me. Now I won't sell the barn for fifty dollars. You get off my property."

Wayne and Winkle hesitated, at a loss as to their next move.

"Did you hear me?" shrieked the man. "Well, I'll make you go. I have a shot-gun in that barn, and I'm going after it. If you are here when I get back, I'll send a load of rock-salt into your legs."

With an alacrity hardly to be expected in one of his age, the owner of the barn turned his back upon them and darted into the shack, slamming and latching the door behind him.

Wee Willie faced his class-mate. "Well —" he began.

From the barn came a sudden report. Involuntarily, the two freshmen turned to run.

"He's shooting," said Winkle.

Penny stole a glance over his shoulder. Then he grasped the other's shoulder. "Look!" he cried, pointing to the barn.

Winkle stared uncertainly until he caught a glimpse of red. "The bicycle lantern must have

exploded," he shouted. "But why doesn't old Brown come out? What's the matter? Do you suppose —"

He did not finish the sentence. They both wheeled and raced back to the barn. Through a window, the telltale flare of flames within was plainly visible. Without a word, Winkle boosted Penny till the boy could peer between the boards that had been nailed across the high opening.

"What can you see?"

"Smoke! Smoke and fire. The hay is on fire, I think."

With both hand and shoulder, Wayne attempted to push in the bars across the window, but they resisted stubbornly. As he worked, little ribbons of flame within wavered higher and higher in the smoke. He dropped to the ground.

"Come on," he called to Winkle; "we must get him out. We can break down the door."

As they neared it, Wee Willie hesitated for a moment, and then threw his shoulder against the boards. They shivered, but the strip across the jamb held it fast.

"Once more," encouraged Penny, "and together!"

They charged at the door full-tilt. This time

the whole side of the barn wavered. The door splintered, but held.

“Again!” gasped Wayne. “When I say the word, we’ll hit it together, near the center. Are you ready? Go!”

Shoulder and shoulder, they crashed against the wooden barrier like bulls. For an instant, it resisted, and then shivered and splintered into a dozen pieces, leaving a great, gaping hole, from which a cloud of smoke rushed forth. The shock had tossed Winkle to one side. Wayne fell to his hands and knees at the very threshold.

Time was precious. Filling his lungs with fresh air, he plunged into the building. The smoke stung his eyes and choked him. The flames licked toward him. But he did not hesitate. Crawling along the floor, where the air was better, he groped for the man’s body.

The task seemed hopeless. His lungs were bursting. He grew bewildered as he lost his sense of direction. Cautiously, he opened his eyes, only to close them immediately as the pungent smoke burned the lids. He felt blindly to the right. The warmth of a little colony of flames sent back his hand sharply. He felt again. This time his fingers closed on the cold muzzle of the gun, and he

followed its length to the stock. But it lay deserted, with no body near it.

What happened next, he never knew. Probably it was a falling timber that struck his head. In any event, the whole scene of smoke and flame vanished as suddenly as a picture wiped from a slate.

When he opened his eyes again, with disconnected thoughts clogging his brain, it was still night. Over to the left, above the heads of the circle of fellows about him, a great fire lighted the whole sky. Wee Willie Winkle, who had rescued him, was bathing his face in cold water. By his side stood Jim Brown, unhurt and without even a burned spot on his clothes. As Wayne looked at him wonderingly, the man spoke.

“Son, it was my fault. I acted like a madman. You see, I wasn’t in the fire at all, because as soon as the lantern exploded I skipped out the back way to telephone for the fire department.” He paused, twiddling nervously with some shapeless mass in his hands and wiping the perspiration from his forehead. “I’ve changed my mind about you college boys. If you think enough of old Jim Brown to risk your neck trying to get him out of a burning building after the way he’d just treated you, I — I — Well, I’m going to change my opin-

ion about the university. Here's something I took away from some of you boys who were prowling about a couple of weeks ago. I suppose by rights it doesn't belong to me. Do you want it, son?"

Penny reached up a wavering hand. Whatever it might be, he could not offend the man by refusing to accept it. But as his fingers sensed the texture of the object, and as the reflection from the sky revealed its color, he sat up with a jerk. It was the cardinal cap!

The others about him had also recognized it by this time, and there was an ominous movement on the part of the sophomores. But while they still hesitated, not knowing what to do, Arnie Borglum, the class president, held up a warning hand.

"Not tonight, fellows," he declared. "Call it a suspension of hostilities until tomorrow. The freshman's earned the right to restore it to his class."

CHAPTER X

THE COACH'S DECREE

"MISTER WAYNE! Oh, Mister Wayne!"

Startled, Penny sat up in bed, stretching his arms full length as if to throw from him the last wisps of sleep.

"Mister Wayne!" This time the voice was accompanied by three smart raps on the door.

"Yes, Mrs. Pillsbury?"

"I didn't want to disturb you, sir, but last night a man named Lubbock called to see you while you were out, and left a note that I promised to give you myself. Shall I shove it under the door?"

"If you please, Mrs. Pillsbury," Penny laughed. For a brief moment, he had experienced a curious foreboding that something was amiss. "I suppose it is about the new signals. Dad is mighty particular about such things."

Slipping his feet into a convenient pair of

"scuffs," he walked over to the door and picked up the long, white envelope. It was not the Athletic Association stationery; evidently, the coach had some private message to communicate. Perhaps, even, it might be a word or two of commendation for the quarter-back's playing in yesterday's game.

Penny tore open the envelope. Before he had read three lines of the note, his arm dropped limply to his side. With a great effort, he raised the paper and forced his way through the message to the last word.

"MY DEAR WAYNE:— This is to inform you officially that you are barred from the football team for the remainder of the season. I am attempting to develop, not eleven spectacular players, but a machine of eleven men working as a unit. By your flagrant refusal to obey my orders, you have demonstrated very clearly that you are a disturbing factor in my scheme. You must understand that a football team is not organized for the purpose of glorifying or making famous the individuals who compose it, but that it represents, in its harmonious whole, the entire student body. Any player who is not willing to serve the best interests of that body is better somewhere else.

"It is not pleasant to reach this decision in your

case, but I am convinced that in doing so I am acting for the best interests, not only of you and myself, but also of Wellworth.

“Very truly yours,

“MACKLIN R. LUBBOCK.”

The note fluttered to the floor from his trembling fingers. In the mirror over the bureau, he saw his face reflected, white and drawn. The lips were moving, but no sound broke the deathly silence of the room.

He threw himself on the bed. It wasn't fair! He had been doing his best, he had saved the game, and — it wasn't fair! No, it wasn't fair!

The long day dragged to its weary end. When Wallie Moogers puffed up the stairs to his room with the morning papers, which described with laudatory superlatives the sensational run that had won the game for Wellworth, Penny thrust them from him, pleading a head-ache. In the afternoon, he took a solitary walk out along the Lake Road, and did not return until well after dark.

But the secret was not one that could be kept. On Monday afternoon, Terwilliger broke down the barrier of silence in characteristic Terwilliger fashion.

Thump! Thump! Thump! "Open the door, Penny; I want to come in."

"Please, Twig! I am studying my chemistry."

"Nonsense! Why, it's time for you to turn out for practice. I want to walk over to the gymnasium with you, just to show folks that I know a regular live football player."

Penny swallowed hard. "I am not going over to the gymnasium today, Twig." In the pause that followed, he fancied he could hear Terwilliger's heart beating.

"Not going over to — You mean to say you are not reporting for practice? What's the matter? Open the door, Penny; let me in."

Wayne turned the key. Under the fusillade of Terwilliger's pointed questions, he confessed that he was barred from the team, and extended the note as proof. Terwilliger read it with angry haste.

"Why, he can't do it!" he shouted, crumpling the sheet of paper and throwing it to the floor. "He can't do it." The boy marched back and forth across Penny's room. "You're the best player on the whole team. I suppose he's down on freshmen; with you off, there won't be a single one in the line-up. He — why, *he's* the one who is

throwing away the best interests of the student body. He *must* let you play!"

Penny shook his head. "No, he can do as he likes about that. He is the coach. In his department, he has just as much authority as a general in the regular army has in his. I am barred for the season, and I can't play. That ends it."

Terwilliger paused dramatically. "No, sir, Penny Penfield," he blazed, "that doesn't end it. The general isn't running the army for himself; he is running it for the people. And this man Lubbock will find out mighty quick that he is running the football team for the students at old Wellworth. You mark my words, he'll find out!"

Thanks to Terwilliger, the news spread like wildfire. By night everybody in the college world knew the story, and, whether it was due to Terwilliger's eloquence and vehemence or to an analysis of the facts in the case, the student sentiment was hostile to Dad Lubbock. When the freshman class met in the auditorium of the Engineering Building that evening, and Penny formally restored the cardinal cap, he was cheered as martyr never was before, and carried about on the shoulders of his stalwart mates until he began to think of himself as a conquering hero.

Nor was this conception in any way lessened by what occurred during the week. On Tuesday, when he entered the chemistry lecture room a little late, the class pounded their chair-arms in salvoes of applause. On Wednesday morning, the city paper devoted a whole column to a review of the disbarment, under head-lines that prejudiced the reader in Wayne's behalf: "COACH DROPS BIGGEST FIND OF SEASON — BAD FEELING CAUSES DAD LUBBOCK TO SUSPEND SENSATIONAL QUARTER-BACK." Not only the freshmen hung upon Penny's football opinions, but the sophomores, the juniors and even the seniors. There was no doubting the public sentiment.

The total absence of a crowd at the station on the following Saturday morning to see the team leave for its game with Weslex University, was not due altogether to this cause, however, but in part to the contempt in which Weslex's eleven was held.

"They play a good game of checkers," Lakers had explained, "and I believe they won the inter-collegiate chess championship one year; but nobody ever saw them play real football."

As a result, no celebration of the anticipated

victory was planned, and the band of loyal enthusiasts that waited patiently for telegraphic news of the outcome was pitifully small. Penny himself would have liked to wait for the returns with the crowd that filled Danford's Drug Store, but an approaching examination in mathematics claimed his attention. It happened, therefore, that he knew nothing of the score until Terwilliger burst into his room, all excitement over the news he bore.

"Lost!" he shouted. "We lost!"

Penny tossed the algebra to one side. "You mean Weslex lost," he corrected. Down deep in his heart, he smothered a quick hope that Wellworth had met defeat.

"No, I don't," declared Terwilliger. "Well, of course, we didn't exactly lose, but Weslex held us to a tie score, and that amounts to the same thing. Think of it, Penny — 13 to 13; that's what they did to us! It's awful! It's a disgrace not to snow Weslex under! We can never hold up our heads again. And it was all Dad Lubbock's fault. If you had been playing quarter-back, we would have won easily."

And, strangely enough, this was the opinion the team itself brought back. Between classes the following morning, Lakers met Penny and Ter-

williger on the upper campus. The speedy full-back shook a discouraged head.

"Yes, it was pretty bad," he admitted. "I want to take back every word I said about Weslex. They do play football there now. But that wasn't why we were beaten."

"Hardly," snapped Terwilliger, laughing nastily.

"We were beaten," continued Lakers, "because we lacked the right kind of a quarter-back. I am not saying a word against little Jarvis — he's plucky and he will develop fast, — but he wasn't the man for the place."

Penny flushed unconsciously. "What was the trouble?" he asked.

"We needed you," said Lakers, looking him squarely in the eyes. "I am not talking to make what's happened seem easier to bear; I am simply telling you the truth. We needed you. We were strong and willing and clever right up to the last, but we were restricted to routine plays. We needed a quarter who could get the snap and dash and vim out of us, and Jarvis couldn't. That's the whole explanation."

At Mrs. Pillsbury's dining tables that noon, the discussion grew vigorous in the extreme. Moogers

and Eidenfessel had persuaded Penny to change from his other boarding-house several days before, and he was back now; back and sitting at the head of the main table. Those who in the first instance had taken his dismissal from the team rather complacently now became almost apoplectic in their excitement.

Herrick, the post-graduate, who had not previously mentioned football, summed up the matter neatly. "If we had not been able to beat Weslex under any circumstances," he said, "I shouldn't care. But if Dad Lubbock had let Wayne play, we could. Lubbock is jealous, and doesn't want a freshman on his team. That is what I said eight years ago when I was a freshman trying for the team, and that is what I say again now."

An hour later, when Penny escaped from this group of out-spoken admirers, he carried with him a very definite notion of his own importance. As he tramped along the Lake Road to the Sand Pit, and then across country toward the Middleton highway, he reviewed the whole distressing affair as honestly as he could. His verdict was what it had always been. Dad Lubbock's barring him from the team was cruel, unjust, tyrannic. He —

"Oh, Penny Penfield!"

It was Wee Willie Winkle, smiling hugely, the perspiration wetting his face in streams as he hurried after the active quarter-back. "I saw you ahead, and wanted to talk over this football squabble with you."

"I don't care to say anything about it," Penny told him honestly.

"Do you know there is a movement against Dad Lubbock?"

"No."

"Well, there is. Everybody is talking it. You're the cause, Penny, and it only needs some trouble-maker like the hot-headed Terwilliger to set it blazing."

"Well?"

Wee Willie pounded his forefinger on an imaginary table. "You can stop it, if you like."

"Why should I?" flared Penny. "Dad Lubbock didn't treat me fairly. Suppose there is a movement to keep the Athletic Association from hiring him another year? I hope there is. It will be the best thing that ever happened to Wellworth."

Winkle stared at him aghast. "But you are responsible for it," he began; and then argued heatedly while they crossed the Middleton road

and by a long detour reached the city again by way of Washington Avenue. But Penny only shut his lips tightly, and refused to answer. He was wholly unconvinced. It wasn't fair! No, it wasn't fair to him!

After Wee Willie had left him, Penny realized suddenly that if he were to reach Mrs. Pillsbury's dining-room before the last of the cold supper vanished he must hurry. As he quickened his pace, he saw ahead of him a familiar figure. It was Dad Lubbock.

A sudden impulse to thresh it out with the coach himself came over him. Perhaps, after all, there were two sides to the question. He arranged the words which were to begin his little speech, rapidly sifting and choosing them as the other approached.

Dad Lubbock was staring steadfastly across the lower campus. The two came nearer together, until barely twenty-five feet separated them; then twenty; then —

The coach turned abruptly to the right, crossing the road to the opposite sidewalk.

The color fled from Penny's cheeks, leaving them sallow and ghastly. Dad Lubbock had refused to meet him! He had deliberately crossed the street

to avoid speaking. Vainly, his common sense told him that the dusk made it difficult to distinguish passersby, that a man thinking hard of other matters might do all Dad Lubbock had done without intentional rudeness or insult. The arguments carried no weight. It was to be a fight, then! Well and good!

As Penny entered the front door of Mrs. Pillsbury's house, a voice from upstairs called a greeting. It was Terwilliger's.

"Come up to my room. You are just in time to sign the petition."

Instead of turning into the dining-hall, the boy marched straight ahead to Terwilliger's room. "Time to sign what?" he demanded.

"A petition to remove Dad Lubbock," explained the impetuous boy who sat at the table. "I started it at one o'clock this afternoon, and I have over two hundred names. There are a dozen other petitions just like it being circulated. The whole college is for you, Penny Penfield."

"You mean that it is a request for the Athletic Association to drop him after this season?"

"Not after this season, no. Now; right now!" declared Terwilliger hotly. "We are arranging a gigantic mass-meeting for tomorrow night to ex-

press our opinion. Dad Lubbock is to be ousted for incompetency. He deserves to be, doesn't he? "

Wayne took the fountain-pen which the other thrust into his hand. He stared uneasily about the room: at the cardinal pennant on the wall; at the photograph of the football squad; at the window, through which he could distinguish the soft turf of the lower campus where the first practices had been held.

" Yes," he said unwaveringly, " he deserves to be ousted."

And at the bottom of the imposing column of names, he wrote in heavy black strokes:

" Penfield Wayne, ex-quarter-back."

CHAPTER XI

THE BIGGER THING

THE knocking was repeated, this time more insistently. Penny turned for a moment from the window, through which he had been listlessly watching the rain that pattered down upon the lower campus.

"Oh, come in!" he invited querulously, wheeling back to his study of the downpour outside; "the door isn't locked."

Behind him, the knob rattled in turning, and the hinges creaked rustily. For a moment, there was silence. Already, Penny was regretting that he had admitted the caller; for, somehow or other, he was in no mood to discuss the football situation with any of the fellows. In another hour, when the mass-meeting had come to order, there would be talk enough.

"I beg your pardon for intruding," began a strange voice from the doorway, "but I couldn't

resist the temptation to drop into my old room again."

"Your room?" challenged the boy by the window, a little bewildered. "I—I don't believe I understand." He rose from his chair, and stared uncertainly at his caller, who proved to be a man of middle age, with an attractive personality that seemed merged in his trim, athletic build and his strong, likable face.

"A dozen years ago," the visitor explained gravely, "I rented this very room, and lived in it one whole college year. My name is Wendell."

Penny held out a welcoming hand. As the other took it, stepping close to him, the boy knew, all at once, the identity of the man. His picture was in the trophy room of the gymnasium.

"Why, you're the Wendell who played full-back the first year Wellworth won the championship, aren't you, sir?" he asked, his eyes shining eagerly. "'Wonder' Wendell, they called you?"

The man nodded good-naturedly. "Yes, I played football that season," he admitted modestly, quite as if he had not been the mainstay of the whole team and had not been selected by a majority of the critics for full-back of the All-

America eleven. "You see," he continued, ignoring the topic as one of minor importance, "I haven't been back to the old school since I graduated. A dozen times I've planned to come, if only for a day; and a dozen times business has made impossible my visit. Just now I am on my way across the country, and my stay here is a matter of hours."

"Do you know, sir," confessed the freshman irrelevantly, still under the spell of his hero-worship, "I didn't even know I had your old room."

"Well, you have. When I stepped off the train, I began to realize that a dozen years is a long time in college life, and that I shouldn't know many who are here now. That's why I came directly to the old room. Perhaps you can tell me where to find one or two of the old crowd. I believe Dad Lubbock is football coach now, isn't he?"

Penny looked suddenly away. Before he answered, he moistened his lips.

"Yes, sir," he answered. "But I hope — I mean, I'm afraid he won't be after the mass-meeting tonight."

Wendell's eyes, which had been hungrily studying each nook and corner of the room, went very

grave and hard. Penny winced unconsciously as they stared unbelievably into his own.

"Do you mean," asked the visitor incredulously, "that there is to be a mass-meeting to-night to protest against Dad's retention as football coach?"

The boy nodded dumbly.

"Tell me about it," said the old-time player. The words were low, and the voice even; but there was a menace in the command.

So Penny told him the whole story, trying honestly to present both sides of the matter as accurately as he could. It was the first time he had recounted his struggles and his disappointments to one who knew nothing of the situation, and he spoke from a very full heart. When he was quite done, Wendell asked quietly:

"Didn't you realize that if the trick failed, as you admit it might, Wellworth would probably have lost the game?"

"Yes," admitted Penny grudgingly, "but it was my great opportunity. It was a chance that might not have come again in twenty games. I couldn't have afforded to overlook it, sir, do you think?"

"I think," said Wendell brusquely, "that you

could have forgotten self, that you could have remembered the perilous position in which you placed the team, that you could have overlooked the selfish possibility in the greater debts you owed Dad Lubbock, the eleven, and the old school itself. You set yourself against these three."

There followed a long silence. For the first time, Penny was beginning to appreciate the arguments that might be raised against him.

"I wonder," hazarded Wendell abruptly, "if you understand that a college is a little world of itself. When you become a part of it, you must learn to love it, and to make sacrifices for it. Unless you do, you won't know that it has a heart and a soul; you won't know that working for it means more — a lot more — than merely working for yourself; you won't comprehend, in short, the meaning of college loyalty. I — Do you mind if I tell you a little story about the time I played football?"

"I should like to hear it," said Penny simply.

"In my first practices," he began, "down there on the lower campus, I was a country boy, and very awkward. The first season — I was only here two years, you know — I didn't make the

varsity team at all. Just why I kept out all through the long months of dreary work, I don't know, unless it was my stubborn nature. Anyhow, I learned a lot about football; once or twice, indeed, I was tried out at full-back for a few minutes in the games.

"When the second season began, I came out for practice once more, a good deal more confident and experienced than I had been the past year. The captain of the team played full-back. For this reason, I was tried out at half, and even in the line; but I didn't fit there. At full, however I seemed to be in my natural position. From the very first, I realized that my weight and my strength and my speed could be used to the fullest advantage only at full-back.

"It wasn't long, either, before the captain knew it, too. It was his last year on the eleven, however, and — well, I dare say he was human enough to want to make it his best. At any rate, he played desperately to prove his right to the place. In practice, on the scrub team, I played just as desperately to prove myself the better man. I wanted to win my W as a regular; I wanted to be a member of the first eleven. It was a wholly selfish ambition, of course, and with

my total lack of loyalty I couldn't understand that the captain was governed by any other motive. It's good, you know, to hear the big crowds cheering you, and tagging on your name after the varsity yell, and singling you out as a hero when you're off the field. You must recognize the vanity that prompted me?"

"Yes," said Penny Wayne, almost in a whisper. His cheeks were burning, and there was a queer lump in his throat.

"Well," continued the man, "we fought out our little battle day after day in practice. It ended one afternoon in the gymnasium, while I sat before my locker dressing. Long before the captain reached me, I saw him coming, with his face set and his eyes hard. At the sight, I went cold and hopeless. But I was wrong.

"‘Wendell,’ he said, ‘you are to play full-back on the varsity after this.’

"It was so utterly unexpected that for a second or two I sat there staring open-mouthed at him. I couldn't seem to realize my good fortune. I remember making some inane remark about showing my gratitude to the coach by playing the best game of which I was capable, and I must have managed to voice my sympathy for

the captain. Oh, I was clumsy and tactless enough!

“He looked at me queerly. ‘Thank you,’ he said quietly; and then he told me, in a wholly impersonal way, that I had won the coveted position because he himself had so elected.

“‘But don’t you want to play full-back yourself?’ I asked.

“He turned away. I saw his shoulders shake once. Then he faced me again, still with the set look on his face. ‘Don’t I want to play? Man, you don’t know how I am fighting to hold myself in. I’d do anything in the world to keep on playing — anything but one. I won’t weaken the team by continuing as full-back when there is a better player to take my place. I won’t put my selfishness before my loyalty to Wellworth. The team needs you at full-back; the old school needs you. It’s a bigger thing than my petty personal ambition to play this year. That’s all, Wendell, except that as my proxy I shall count upon you in every emergency.’”

The speaker paused. Over on the mantel, the little alarm clock ticked noisily. Outside, in the hall, footsteps sloughed past the door. In the silence that followed, both the man and the

boy could hear the patter of rain upon the tin roof. Presently, Wendell took up the thread of his story again.

“There is a little more to tell. I played out the season at full-back, crowding the captain off the eleven. I am glad I can say honestly that I did my best, and that my best was enough to turn the balance in favor of Wellworth when we met the other teams that were fighting for the championship. My development was remarkable—I suppose my nickname of ‘Wonder’ originated for that reason—but it was due almost wholly to the incessant coaching of the captain himself, who worked over me as enthusiastically and as unselfishly as if he had made no sacrifice at all.”

“I think,” said Penny reverently, “that I am beginning to understand what you mean by loyalty. I am beginning to understand, too, how blind I have been, and how selfish, and how—unfair! I wish I might know that captain.”

“You do,” smiled Wendell. “He’s a graduate coach now. I’ve been telling you about Dad Lubbock.”

“Oh!” cried the boy, as if he had been struck. “Oh! I didn’t know.” He moistened his lips

and drew a handkerchief across his face. The dampness from outside was creeping into the room. "And now we are trying to force him out as coach because — Why, when I disobeyed him, and risked defeat for the whole team that I might satisfy my own personal ambition, he saw that I wasn't the kind that would think of — of the bigger thing. He acted exactly as he should in punishing me; he couldn't have done anything else, could he? And I suppose he knew all the time how the fellows would construe his action, and how I'd hate him and work tooth and nail against him, and how unpopular it would make him with the whole student body. But his own standing didn't matter to Dad Lubbock; he was too loyal to the college and to the team to consider the effect upon himself. . . . Oh, I've been blinded to the greater issue by my own selfishness and vanity. I — I — How can I undo all the harm I have wrought, Mr. Wendell?"

"You might," said the man, looking at him keenly, "get into the good graces of Dad Lubbock again by going to the mass-meeting and telling your supporters what a hero he really is. Perhaps, if you did, he might reinstate you on the team."

"Oh, I didn't mean that," said the freshman,

with so much of the hurt in his tone that the other felt like apologizing. "I'll go to the mass-meeting, yes; and I'll work like a beaver for Dad Lubbock. But I won't do it for a reward. I won't even try for the team again this season."

"I think," remarked Wonder Wendell, with a glad look on his face, "that you are going to develop into a true Wellworth loyalist of the best kind. Now I can tell you that Dad Lubbock is a stickler for principle; I learned that when he shamed me for offering to drop out and allow him to play, after I had come to a full realization of his sacrifice for me. No, he won't rescind your sentence. But you can go to the mass-meeting and tell the students that he is right and that you are wrong. And afterward, if you like, you can go to him and apologize."

"But that's so little," complained the penitent boy. "I want to prove my sincerity in some more practical way, for the good of the team. Isn't there anything else I can do?"

"There's everything else," said the man quietly. "You can show your courage by getting out with the squad each afternoon, and helping with the new players who don't know the game; and by lining up with the scrubs to give the proper

stimulus for real football to the first eleven, without hope of winning a place on it; and by stirring up those who haven't reported for practice because nobody has instilled into their hearts the debt they owe the old college; and by setting right those others who are disgruntled because they have lost sight of the greater loyalty in the lesser personal grievances. Yes, you'll discover plenty of vents for practical loyalty. And, unless I am very much mistaken, you'll find playing on the team by proxy quite as exciting and satisfying as if you were really figuring in each scrimmage. Shall we run over to the mass-meeting now? "

Those who gathered that night to condemn Dad Lubbock remained to applaud each mention of his name. Wonder Wendell was the first speaker, and he told them the story of the coach's last year as a player about as he had recounted it earlier to Penfield Wayne. Then Penny himself found his way to the platform. He lacked the ready eloquence of the trained orator, and at first his voice scarcely carried to the far corners of the great auditorium. But as the audience quieted under the spell of his earnest, sincere,

convincing arguments for Dad Lubbock, coming boyishly but pleadingly from a very full heart, he swayed it as a more polished speaker could not have done. When he was quite through, he sat down in one of the chairs on the rostrum, a little afraid of the absolute silence that followed. But he need not have been. He had left his hearers as reproachful and as ashamed of their plan to oust Dad Lubbock as he had been himself at the conclusion of Wendell's story in the room.

In the end, the students at the meeting passed a resolution endorsing the coach, praising his skill and courage, and promising him their support at all times. This same thing Penfield Wayne unconsciously repeated to Dad Lubbock, as an expression of his own changed attitude, when he left the mass-meeting and went straight to the man's room. After the coach had assured himself that the boy was apologizing and begging to be allowed to continue practising with the squad, quite without hope of being rewarded by a withdrawal of the disbarment, he held out an eager hand.

"Thank you," he said, holding the other's tight. "I shall be glad to have you working with the other boys again, and I know now that I may count upon your loyal aid. It means more

than you imagine, perhaps, to learn you're that kind."

Outside the house where the coach lived, Penny met Terwilliger, who peered suspiciously at his smiling face.

"Well! Well!" exclaimed the other. "So Dad Lubbock is going to let you play again on the team, is he?"

Wayne shook his head.

"Then why," persisted Terwilliger, "are you grinning like a Cheshire cat?"

But Penfield Wayne offered no explanation. He went his way, with head held high, feet that seemed not to touch the ground, and the smile still wreathing his face.

He had found himself at last.

CHAPTER XII

MOVING MOOGERS

WITH both feet planted squarely upon the floor, Wallie Moogers stared dispassionately at Penfield Wayne's framed picture of "The Flying Tackle."

"No," he said stubbornly, "I won't! That's all there is to it."

"But why won't you?" persisted Penny for the seventh time.

"Yes, why won't you?" added Terwilliger suspiciously.

"I've told you," declared Moogers; "I've told you eighteen times. I am not going to report for football practice because I don't like the game. I don't like any game that is strenuous."

Wayne's brow puckered. He had counted upon inducing his big freshman friend to join Dad Lubbock's practice squad, without fully appreciating the difficulties. And now, when he had made his demand upon Wallie, that youth had flatly re-

fused to consider the idea for an instant. He brought forth a last argument.

“ You don’t like the gymnasium drills, do you? ” he asked. “ No? Well, if you get out for the team, you won’t have to report for them.”

Wallie Moogers laughed inwardly until his round body shook with the chuckles. “ Is it possible? If I get out and allow myself to be worked like a dray-horse day after day, I will be excused from going to the gymnasium drill four times a week and fooling with little wooden dumbbells. Now, that *sounds* enticing. Just the same, I may as well confess shamelessly that I enjoy my drills, and that they promise to be even more pleasant after this. The regular instructor has departed for England to attend a physical culture congress, and he has left all his classes to an innocent professor from the hill, who appears for the first time this noon. We expect to — er — enjoy him.” And Moogers laughed again, this time aloud.

The ponderous freshman, indeed, was in a peculiarly happy frame of mind. For a full hour, he had resisted the combined entreaties of Penny and Twig that he get out and frolic with the eleven, and not only had he remained quite unmoved, but in his opinion he had presented an

unassailable argument in defense. No amount of pleading nor threatening could stir him an inch. He pointed a chubby finger at Terwilliger as that individual frowned from the window-seat.

"Look here, Twig, since you're so anxious all of a sudden to have everybody try for the team, why don't you do it yourself?"

"Too thin," explained Terwilliger. "All my weight has run to length. Anyhow, I am putting in my spare time on the cinder track, learning to run."

Moogers shoved back his chair, and rose slowly to his feet. "Well, I trust I am now excused from football practice," he grinned. "Perhaps, if Vobock doesn't bear up under the strain of drills, I may not have to do anything at all."

To Wallie's surprise, Penny's face evinced a shade of sudden interest. "Vobock? Do you mean Professor Vobock, the elocution teacher? Is he going to be in charge of the gymnasium classes?"

"Yes. What are you smiling about? Do you know him?"

"I am taking elocution under him; one hour a week."

Moogers nodded his head condescendingly.

"Well, Penny, you tell your friend Vobock that he will find us interested in the new theories he expects to advance. Put it very mildly, please! We are going to have a lot of fun with Professor Vobock; yes, a whole lot of fun."

As the three stamped down the stairs to their first recitation of the morning, Moogers was vaguely worried. It seemed to him Penny was unnaturally jovial and gay, as if he had learned of some enormous joke on the other. Several times, Wallie felt beneath his collar and around the tail of his coat, on the chance his class-mates had pinned a laundry bill or a stray sock for the public to view and enjoy. But he could find nothing.

"What's the matter?" he exploded peevishly, as they separated at the entrance to Main Hall.

"Nothing," answered Penny gravely, and then, after a pause, "yet."

To Wallie Moogers, the forenoon was a wearisome, dragging period, hazed in perpetual mystery; for the conduct of both Penny and Twig was a baffling puzzle. At ten o'clock, he passed Terwilliger in the lower hall, talking to four other freshmen, who grinned at every word he was saying. At sight of Moogers, however, the group

became as silent and serious as the mural paintings in the president's office. At eleven, Wallie caught sight of both Wayne and Terwilliger engaged in some elaborate campaign that included the button-holing of many freshmen. But when he approached, expecting to be included in the class secret, they merely nodded gloomily and inquired if he were ready to get out for football yet.

He was not. He said so with wholly unnecessary vigor, softened only by a concluding chuckle as he thought of the fun he would be having presently with Professor Vobock. Of course, if he elected to practise on the gridiron, it would mean the abandoning of his drills.

It was a merry and excited little band that Moogers found preparing for the noonday division of the gymnastic class. This course, which was compulsory for freshmen and sophomores not in training with one of the athletic teams, was divided into three classes, one of which was obliged to utilize the noon hour for its session. As a rule, this section was sober in the extreme, and thought chiefly of completing its task and getting back to lunch; but today high spirits ruled the locker room.

"They say he is immense," laughed a little freshman named Shaw. "Has all sorts of queer

ideas. I know a fellow who is in his elocution class, and if what he says is true we may expect a lot of fun."

"We will extract all there is," promised Moogers, pulling on his rubber-soled shoes.

The previous class hour had ended at 11.50. At 12.15, the noon division of the gymnastic course filed upstairs into the drill room, with big Wallie Moogers leading. Try as he would, he could not entirely efface the anticipatory smile which he had worn all morning. He glanced carelessly around the great room until his eyes rested upon the gallery at the south end.

"H'm!" he grunted. "H'm!"

In place of the empty chairs that usually greeted this class, the entire front row was filled with an audience of freshmen, with Penfield Wayne sitting in the middle, like the interlocutor at a minstrel show. Moogers tried to smile up at them, but they gazed down with solemn faces. If it had not been for the entry of Professor Vobock at this moment, Wallie would have been disconcerted.

A ripple of laughter spread over the ranks of boys in gymnasium costumes. It increased to a roar, and then died suddenly to nothing at all.

Professor Vobock was a man out of the ordinary. His neck was short and thick; his head, bulging and dome-like. Thick-lensed spectacles made his eyes seem of unhuman proportions. As his hairy arms dangled from the sleeveless shirt, they looked nearly twice the normal length.

"Attention!" he cried.

There was some note in the voice that stiffened them all. In spite of his odd appearance, he had in him the ability to command obedience.

"To your places!"

"Wait till we get started, whispered little Shaw to Moogers, as they walked to their numbered spots near the balcony. "It will be fun."

"Gentlemen," began Professor Vobock, "this is my first acquaintance with you. I —"

There was something about his slight foreign accent and his pompadoured hair that appealed to Moogers as irresistibly humorous. He giggled outright. Professor Vobock eyed him coldly, and presently resumed.

"Gentlemen, I do not believe any of you in this division are members of my classes in elocution. Therefore, I shall have to explain to you my system. I deplore brute strength; I believe in grace. While I am in control of this part of

your education, therefore, I shall cultivate grace — always grace.”

As Moogers reflected how the class would enjoy upsetting a theory based upon grace rather than strength, he opened his mouth and gave passage to a hearty, uncontrollable burst of laughter.

Professor Vobock pointed at him. The room became suddenly still. “Sir, while I am here, I am your instructor. I shall demand from you obedience and respect. If I do not get it, I shall take your name. The president of this university has given me full power to suspend or expel any student of this division who makes the work harder than necessary.”

From the little group of freshmen that lined the balcony, came vigorous applause. Moogers’ mirth was shed as if it had been a garment to throw off at will. There were reasons — home reasons — why he dared not pursue the fun-making under such penalties. “But the other fellows will go as far as they dare,” he consoled himself. “It will be as good as a circus yet.”

Moogers was quite right, although his expectations were not fulfilled exactly as he had imagined them.

“Now, gentlemen,” said the little professor,

with animation simply radiating from every inch of his stature, "we learn grace from children. I am going to ask each one of you to imagine himself a little child. First, Joy!"

He stretched out his hands as if he had just tossed a ball into the air. His right foot was advanced. His head was thrown back. A smile curled his lips.

"There! Now, young gentlemen, do as I do. All together! Joy!"

The result was interesting, however much it might fall short as a successful picture of Joy. The balcony audience slapped the railing in approval.

"Look at Wallie Moogers," said Oskison in an audible whisper. "Isn't he beautiful? He looks like a painting of Spring."

"He is just throwing off a cold," suggested Penny, "and he is holding up his arms to see if he can catch it again."

"Hold the pose, all!" commanded the professor. Moogers lowered his arms a trifle, but was afraid to drop them altogether.

"Why, there's Wallie Moogers," piped up Terwilliger suddenly. "See, he is trying to call the birdies to him. Peep! Peep! Peep!"

"Position!" shouted Professor Vobock.

As Moogers dropped his heavy arms, he turned his head slightly to send a scornful glance at his tormentors. But the instructor forestalled him. "Eyes to the front, *if* you please. You young gentleman with the much flesh, turn your eyes this way. You are not yet so graceful you can afford to miss the lesson." (Penny applauded.) "Attention. Next comes Fear."

The professor drew himself back, knees bent and fists clenched, while an expression of horror crept over his face. His arms suggested those of the boxer endeavoring to ward off a rain of blows.

"You have all your lives been afraid of something; is it not so? Very well! Now, all together! Fear!"

Although he did not throw himself entirely into the posture, Wallie Moogers was acutely aware that he had done so enough to appear ridiculous. With growing anger, he heard the remarks that bubbled innocently from the happy family in the balcony.

"See poor old Moogers; he's afraid of the algebra exam."

"I guess there is a bear after him, which threatens to eat off all his white meat, poor fellow."

"My, doesn't he look awful — so big and fierce?"

"He always does," put in Terwilliger. "That's just the way he always looks. He rooms right next to me, and I know."

"Love" was next. On one knee, with head tilted, the professor extended his right hand as if to smooth a fevered brow. Moogers imitated reluctantly.

"Wallie is caressing his favorite dictionary."

"A touching proof of how much he loves hard work."

"Moogers defying a wireless telegraph station."

By the time the professor allowed the class to relax, Wallie's blood was degrees above the boiling point. Whether the instructor heard the remarks from the end balcony, it was certain he paid no attention to them. To make it more aggravating, the class was as dutiful and as obedient as it had been in the past, and with each minute Professor Vobock was becoming more and more enthusiastic and excited. Moogers sighed deeply.

"One thing more, gentlemen, and we end today's lesson. We must copy the grace of children in their play. For that purpose, nothing

is better than the old-fashioned what you call 'hippity-hop.' ” He illustrated the step. “ Now, forward, all! Hippity-hop! ”

The class skipped forward. To Moogers, this was the crowning humiliation of the day.

“ Wallie isn't exactly graceful, is he? ” observed Penny in a low, critical voice.

“ Why, I think so, ” championed Terwilliger hotly. “ I don't think I have ever seen that imitation of an automobile with a punctured tire done any better. ”

But the lesson was not yet over. The trained eye of the professor had detected Moogers' listless leg movements. Leaving the raised platform, he ran among the files of students, and half-dragged the unfortunate shirker to the front of the class.

“ Here is a man, ” he explained, “ who is clumsy — he is fat — he is ungraceful. I shall give him special training, and before the year is over I shall make him as nimble and beautiful of manner as any of you. ”

“ Poor old Wallie, ” sighed Terwilliger. “ I loved him well. ”

“ We shall begin the training now. Sir, you will hippity-hop alone around the class. ”

"I — I won't," began Moogers, angrily; "I —"

The eyes of Professor Vobock assumed colossal proportions. "You will hippity-hop around the class, or I shall report you to the president. Which is it?"

For a moment, Wallie Moogers wavered, grown desperate from the incessant comment upon his actions. Then, recalling what the defiance would mean in the end, he lifted his foot to start.

For the first ten yards, to his disgust, the instructor saw fit to accompany him. "Graceful now. Light and easy. The spirit of youth. Before all other things, the spirit of youth. See up in the gallery, where the other young gentlemen are sitting. Note how glad and gay and unrestrained they are. Laugh as you skip: ha-ha! ha-ha!"

With the perspiration pouring from his face, Moogers continued on his long run. From hair to heels, he felt he was making a fool of himself. He knew it. And although he tried hard to step out of time, he could not escape the "Tra-la-la! Tra-la-la!" that floated musically down from the balcony.

He had completed two sides and was starting on the third when the freshmen above trolled

out a strangely familiar chorus, led by the clear tenor of Terwilliger. As his fellow sufferers on the floor joined in, Moogers caught the words. It was a song he had not heard for twelve years:

“Hippity-hop to the barber shop
To get a stick of candy;
One for Lou
And one for Sue
And one for Sister ‘Mandy.’”

“Beautiful!” murmured the professor, as Moogers completed the circuit of the room, utterly exhausted. “I should not have believed it possible. Such an exhibition of the spirit of youth! And in America, too, where little boys are old men! Wonderful!”

The Moogers who had entered the locker room at twelve was not the same Moogers who left it an hour later. But before giving up, he resolved to make a last plea for clemency. Fortunately, Professor Vobock was still in the little round office which Dr. Henderson and the absent instructor had shared.

“What?” he exclaimed, when Moogers had made his errand clear. “You wish me to excuse you until Professor Sandon returns. No, no, it is impossible; it cannot be. You are making

such strides with me, yes? You must learn grace. You must get rid of self-consciousness. You must regain the spirit of youth. Every day I hope those young gentlemen will come into the gallery, and bring with them the same spirit of youth. In time, if they do, you will learn what it is. No, Mr. Moogers, we shall get on very well together; very well, I am sure. And I shall give you personal aid again tomorrow. No, I cannot excuse you from my class."

Wallie caught up with Penny and Terwilliger just outside of Mrs. Pillsbury's boarding-house. He was tired but determined.

"What must I do," he asked, "to get a football suit from the Athletic Association? I have decided to try for the team."

CHAPTER XIII

THE NEW CANDIDATE

ON the following Monday afternoon, Wallie Moogers reported with the football squad for practice. Penny, looking like a tiny child as he marched by the side of his lumbering friend, introduced him to the coach, and added the wholly superfluous information that if the big fellow proved worthy of a place on the team he would add materially to its total weight.

Dad Lubbock studied Moogers' plump body without smiling. He sorely needed one or two heavier players to give the proper balance to the eleven, and he was secretly pleased to note the prompt manner in which little Penny was proving his loyalty. Moreover, from the wealth of long experience, the coach had learned not to judge too hastily. Sometimes, as he well knew, it happened that a master player emerged from a pretty laughable cocoon of a candidate. That there might be no miracle uninvited in this in-

stance, therefore, he promptly made room for the big fellow on the second or scrub team, and bade the varsity test him out.

Just as Wayne had feared, Moogers refused to accept the badgering attack seriously. When he was downed suddenly, with six players astride of him burrowing his head into the sod and unconsciously filling his mouth and nose and eyes with dirt, he laughed good-naturedly. When he missed a tackle, and sprawled clumsily upon the ground, he took it as a huge joke upon himself. And when he delayed or ruined completely a well-planned play, he simply grinned at the quarter-back's rage. He was willing enough, and courageous enough, and certainly heavy enough; but these are only the first foundations upon which football skill is builded. Dad Lubbock shook his head doubtfully.

But Penny was not discouraged. When the coach had relegated Moogers to the side-lines after a few scrimmages, the little freshman followed at his heels, determined to waken the player from his lethargy.

"Look here, Wallie," he said, "you are failing because you're too slow, too soft, too fat and too ambitionless."

Moogers laughed with easy tolerance. He had a profound respect for his classmate, and refused to be offended by the blunt accusation.

“Well,” he admitted lamely, “nobody loves a fat man.”

“Why?” snapped Penny. He knew he was risking the big fellow’s friendship by pursuing the subject, but he was very much in earnest.

The other shook his head. It was not his habit to analyze the problems of life.

“I’ll tell you why,” went on Penny, raising his voice to make the charge impressive. “It’s not the flesh that hangs on fellows like you; it’s what the flesh does. Here you stand, grinning like an idiot because you’re a failure on the football field, and because you haven’t the ambition to be anything else. If you’d quit being what the fat typifies — lazy, careless, spineless and slow-moving — why, the others would love you enough, big as you are. But you — ” He stopped dramatically, puffing out his cheeks with the words he had no wish to speak.

Wallie Moogers looked at him thoughtfully — but without smiling. It seemed to Wayne that the mouth was firmer and the eyes brighter. When

the other spoke, he was conscious of a subtle change in the heavy voice.

"I suppose," said Moogers slowly, "that you think I'm through?"

"Aren't you?" demanded Penny, as innocently as he could.

"No, sir, I am not!" boomed the big voice stubbornly. "I am going to show you and Dad Lubbock that I've backbone enough to stick it out to the end, win or lose."

The little freshman thrust out an impulsive hand. "Wallie," he said, "we'll stick it out together — and we'll win!"

In the afternoons of practice that followed, no player toiled harder or improved more rapidly than Wallie Moogers. There was no doubt about it. Penny's fiery denunciation had stirred his dormant ambition, and had set him working with a serious face and a receptive mind. Even Dad Lubbock marveled, not fully comprehending the process which was responsible, but unerringly giving credit to the little freshman who hovered over his classmate as zealously as a hen over her chick — or, as Terwilliger put it, like a Banty rooster training an ostrich.

On Thursday, when a muddy field quickly

sapped the energies of the regular varsity players, the coach excused them early, and devoted the balance of the practice period to a short game between two elevens selected from the others on the squad. Upon one of these teams, Moogers was tried out at full-back.

Before he took his position, Penny clapped an encouraging hand upon the other's broad back. "Now, Wallie," he said quietly, "go out there and play those other chaps off their feet. You can do it."

The gaunt grandstand held only a few rooters, but when Moogers marched forth upon the field their boisterous applause would have done credit to a crowd. Nor was there any mistaking the note of ironical glee; they were welcoming, not the hero, but the clown. The big fellow himself appeared totally oblivious to the taunting cries and laughter, but on the side-lines Penny, crouching low, flushed painfully.

"They'll see," he told himself, nervously clenching and unclenching his hands. "They'll see. Wallie is going to surprise them."

And he did. As the game warmed into its full vigor, the rooters began to cheer the big full-back in earnest, and to jeer the hapless oppo-

nents who tried futilely to stop his elephantine runs with the ball, and to exult noisily when offensive formations, plunging upon his mass of flesh, quivered limp and dead. Once he was in action, there was no halting him; and, once he was braced for the shock, there was no power the other team could muster that would send plays through that portion of the line he braced, or around him, or over him.

Much of this, as Wayne reluctantly admitted to himself, was due to Moogers' advantage of sheer weight and to the loose and haphazard teamwork of the opposing eleven. But Wallie went farther. His moon face was unsmiling and alert. When he was to take the ball, or to fit into a niche of the interference, he was always waiting on his toes, ready and eager for the scrimmage. On several occasions, moreover, as Penny took note to point out to the coach, the full-back was too quick for the others, who were forever sprawling about uncertainly in the soft soil. Once, near the end of the practice game, when the other team had attempted a quarter-back kick that lured half of the defense astray and threatened a touchdown, it was Moogers whose saving brain grasped the maze of the ball's passage and

permitted of a saving tackle. Whatever qualities he might still lack, his careless indifference was gone, and he had learned to think and plan for himself.

For this mental advance, he had Penny to thank, not alone for the little fellow's incessant advice on the field during each period of practice, but also because of certain talks and explanations, made clearer by charts, that had taken place between them in the latter's room, behind locked doors, much to the disgust of Terwilliger, who could not fathom why he should not be included in the secret. It was not Penny's way to do things by halves.

The big full-back accepted his earned praise of "Good work, old man," from Dad Lubbock without emotion, and the congratulatory hand-clasp of his classmate. But they served their purpose. There was a new light of determination in Moogers' eyes and a new tenseness of his lips. For the first time in his easy-going life, he was a-tingle with ambition.

And then, as suddenly as he had gained his pedestal, he toppled off. On the strength of his showing on Thursday, the coach decided to start the game on Saturday with Moogers play-

ing full-back. Wellworth anticipated an easy victory, as its opponent, Clayton College, was not considered even dangerous. So sure was Dad Lubbock of the outcome, indeed, that he had planned to leave his team in charge of Arnie Borglum, who was out of the line-up with a sore knee-cap, and himself attend a game in another city, to study in action a more formidable eleven they were to meet two weeks later. For this reason, he gave Moogers a final trial as full-back on the varsity for a five-minute practice on Friday

It was a hot, muggy afternoon, ill-adapted for speedy play, but the weather was not accountable for the demoralization of the football machine that followed. From the very first, it creaked and groaned, slipping, stopping, running in the most wheezy, hit-and-miss fashion. The weak cog, as even Penny acknowledged in the end, was Wallie Moogers at full-back. He had slumped back into his former inefficiency. He was again flabby, slow-starting and infinitely clumsy.

For nearly the full five minutes, the coach allowed him to disrupt the whole eleven. This was due in part to Wayne's plea in behalf of the player and in part to the forlorn hope that the big fellow would find himself and regain that intangible

quality he had displayed the day before. But when hope gave way to common sense, Dad Lubbock called him to the side-lines, and put Lakers back in his regular position. Lakers was trim and fast and clean-limbed, and everything else that Moogers was not, and could start with the ball and hustle the quarter-back and outrace the tacklers, and do everything else that Moogers could not.

But if the public and the coach had pronounced hopeless the task of making a football player of the big freshman, there was one who stood by staunchly, and encouraged. Never for a moment did Penny lose faith in his friend's ultimate success.

"They can't make us quit until the last down," he told Wallie, "and we've a long time to wait and work and learn. You probably won't get into the game against Clayton tomorrow; Dad Lubbock is going to leave Borglum in charge, and he isn't over-cordial with me, simply because he is a sophomore and I am a freshman. I presume he will keep Lakers in from first to last; anyhow, he won't care for any advice from me. But the whistle hasn't ended the bigger game yet, has it?"

Moogers grunted a decisive negative. He had

tasted fame, and he knew its sweetness. And if Penfield Wayne said he could eventually win a place on the team, the achievement was already as good as accomplished.

But that was not all. Just before Dad Lubbock suspended practice for the afternoon, Penny solved the problem with which he had been wrestling.

"Big boy," he confided, "I know — that is, I am reasonably certain I do — why you succeeded yesterday and then failed today. It's simple enough, too."

Then, while Moogers listened attentively, he outlined his theory. As he talked, the other's eyes grew big with wonder, and he nodded understandingly. This new knowledge was the final spur to his ambition, now grown as big as his ponderous body, that would keep him practising faithfully day after day, eager for instruction and help, thankful for each point mastered, and exulting while he was buffeted from player to player and buried beneath a human avalanche, to emerge sore and hurt — and smiling voraciously. For it meant that when the proper opportunity offered, he would not fail.

"So it won't matter," finished Penny, "if

you do sit on the side-lines through tomorrow's game. Down in your heart, big boy, you'll know that sooner or later your chance will come. And if by any twist of luck it should be as full-back against Clayton, and if — ”

Moogers, who had been sniffing the air during this speech, interrupted with a most irrelevant remark.

“ It smells like rain,” he said gravely.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ELASTIC ELEVENS

BEFORE the game with Clayton on Saturday was two minutes old, Penfield Wayne realized that something was wrong. Only the night before, Dad Lubbock had assured him that Wellworth would win easily. Yet here at the very outset, the visitors were charging steadily down the field, yards at a time, quite as if there were no opposition at all. It was almost unbelievable.

Once more, as the boy watched fearfully, the Clayton backs plunged. But this time Wellworth's line, after allowing a stray interference man to burst through, closed like a weighted gate, flinging from it the runner with the ball.

Penny wrapped his cardinal blanket closer about him. At his side, little Martin, shivering in the raw air, followed his example. Ten yards to the right, Wallie Moogers crouched on the side-lines, as silent and impassive as some Indian chief.

Arnie Borglum, in charge of the team during the coach's absence, paced nervously up and down, stopping occasionally to stare fixedly at the scrimmages, and then nodding reluctantly at what he saw, as one does when he is driven against his will to accept an undeniable fact.

As the teams lined up anew, Penny rubbed his eyes and went back to his counting. Although the total was what he might have expected, and exactly what it should have been, he was not wholly satisfied. He peered thoughtfully above the black, half-filled stands and bleachers, toward the rift in the leaden sky through which the sun was beaming for the moment. The drizzle had ceased temporarily, and the boy found himself wondering if the sudden glare of the fireball was not responsible for the strange suspicion.

Once more the Clayton back-field massed for a cross-buck over tackle, executing the play with a neatness and success that were appalling to the watcher on the side-lines. As if in sympathy with Wellworth, the sun disappeared in a bank of cloud, and the drizzle began afresh, oozing down upon the field and spreading into a faint mist, which rolled upward from the earth like steam. Already, the downpour had transformed the toiling players

into grotesque caricatures of mud-smutched humans.

As Penny crouched, awaiting the next move, there boomed into his ears the bass drum's salvo of triumph, echoed immediately by the sharp, staccato Wellworth yell. From the other side of Camp Randall came the answering roar of defiance, a clear "locomotive" that rose even above the greater volume of voices.

"They'll kick now!" shouted the excitable Martin a minute later. "We've penned 'em up at last."

Wayne settled a cold hand in a fold of his damp blanket. "No," he said shortly, "they won't kick. Watch."

It was not a kick, not even a pretense at kicking. The back-field of Clayton lined up as they had done a dozen times already. The play was obvious. Then the ball jerked from its muddy bed on the ground, and the four players leaped toward the waiting line.

"Hold 'em, Wellworth! Hold 'em!" chanted the rooters. The cry rose like a groan.

For a moment, tense with its possibilities, it seemed that the defenders might master the charge. The on-rushing back-field wavered to a transient

halt, and then, as if some greater force were aiding Clayton, as if some friendly ghost of dead and gone gridiron hero were lending a hand, the left wing gave way, and the runner with the ball plunged through the gap for a clear gain of ten yards.

There it was again. Penny rose quickly to his knees, breathing fast, and began to count. Before he had finished, another scrimmage was on, and another gain had been made through Wellworth's line.

"That's it," he cried.

Little Martin turned a startled face toward him. "What's it?" he demanded.

But Penny did not answer. He shut his lips closer together, ignoring the questioner altogether, and trained his attention steadfastly upon the struggling teams out on the field.

For the third consecutive time, Clayton concentrated its attack upon Wellworth's line, which bent, snapped suddenly, and opened a great hole through which the opposing back-field might have walked four abreast. Penny crawled excitedly to the side of Borglum, who was taking the coach's place that day.

"Arnie," he shouted into the other's very face,

"Arnie, I know what's wrong. Quick! Count them, Arnie; count the players. Clayton is outplaying us because there are twelve men on its team. You just count — Oh, there's the whistle ending the quarter. But wait till they line up again. Why, their eleven isn't an eleven at all; it's a twelve."

Borglum shrugged his massive shoulders and bent cold eyes upon Penny. "That's quite impossible, Wayne," he said, and turned away.

"But it's true," cried Penny. "You count, and you'll see that I am right. I tell you, there are twelve."

But there was no counting the Clayton team now, in the intermission between periods; nor was the prospect more promising a half-minute later, when play was resumed. As fast as the shots from an automatic revolver, a series of plays was literally sweeping the Wellworth eleven from its feet. One followed another before the players were fairly in position after a down. In the kaleidoscopic shifts, it was quite impossible to distinguish players through the misty fog; from the side-lines, indeed, Penny could note only that Clayton was tearing and ripping through the opposing human barricade as if it were paper.

No team could withstand such offense, the more effective because of its incessance. From the middle of the field, the ball jumped, by five and ten-yard leaps, to within a scant seven yards of the goal. Here, with everything depending upon the next move, Clayton formed for what looked like the first scoring play of the afternoon. Even Borglum, with his stolid nature, was kneeling weakly, his fingers like claws as they dug into the soft earth.

“Arnie, listen to me!” Penny’s voice was a-quiver with dismay and excitement.

Before he could say more, the play was on. But once again, luck was with Wellworth. With the touchdown only a few scant yards away, there followed a fumble, due to the slimy condition of the ball; and when the officials had finally bored down into the struggling pile of players, they found little Jarvis curled about the precious leather. As the crowd in the stands sank back into its seats with a mighty sigh that denoted its snapped tension of interest, Parker trotted back of the goal-line to punt out of danger.

With an audacity that surprised even himself, Penny Wayne gripped Borglum by the shoulder and shook him vigorously.

“Quick, Arnie, count them now; right off, before Parker kicks. Count them, I tell you. They’re playing us with twelve men.”

Borglum shook his head in disgust. “Haven’t I enough to worry about without being pestered by you?” he growled. “Use your common sense, freshman!”

“Count them — please!”

Borglum turned wearily toward the field, pointing to the Clayton players preparing to block the kick if possible, and checked them off on his fingers. “— five — six — and three on the other side make nine — ten — and one back there: eleven. Does that satisfy you? If it does, tell me so.”

The expression of expectancy on Penny’s face gave way to one of profound astonishment. Just above his nose, his forehead crinkled into a tangle of little creases.

“Well?” prompted Borglum.

Penny finished his second counting. “You’re right, Arnie,” he confessed reluctantly, “there are only eleven now. But three times now, while they were lining up, I made it twelve. One of them must —”

The coach-in-charge snapped his interruption. “I suppose you are going to tell me the extra

player disappears every now and then, eh? I suppose he becomes invisible, or is swallowed up in thin air, or — Oh, go over there and sit down by little Martin, won't you? You drive me mad with your crazy suspicions."

Penny moved away from his side, still puzzled and worried. Near his classmate, the substitute quarter-back, he squatted down upon his cardinal blanket once more, determined to solve the mystery.

"Marty," he said presently, "in that first quarter, when we were being driven down the field, didn't I see you counting?"

"Well, suppose I was?"

"Marty, were — were you counting the Clayton fellows?"

"Suppose I was?"

"How many were there?" As he asked the question, Penny leaned forward with a tense face.

Martin smiled cunningly. He was still rankling under the smart of the other's earlier silence.

"There were one thousand, four hundred and seventy-six and a half," he declared soberly.

“What?”

“My count may be nine-sixteenths too high. You meant the Clayton rooters, of course. How many did you make it?”

Wayne scowled sourly at his friend, failing to appreciate the humor at this time, and burrowed deeper into his blanket. Despite the answer, he was confident that Martin had also seen what he could not convince himself was true. Yes, assuredly something was wrong, very wrong.

Again, out on the field, there came a wild scramble. The Clayton quarter-back fumbled, and little Jarvis scooped up the ball. Warmed by this success, the Wellworth back-field, with either Parker or Lakers as the apex of its interference, skirted the ends for fair gains, and even plunged successfully. Profiting by what it had recently experienced, the team began to run off its plays with the rapidity of a trip-hammer, getting the jump on its opponents by putting the ball in motion before they were lined up compactly.

But Wellworth's advantage was lost as suddenly as it had been gained. Thirty yards from the dripping white goal-posts, the visitor's line stiffened into a veritable stone wall of defense. As

a last desperate effort, Parker fell back on the fourth down to attempt a drop-kick for goal, only to have it blocked completely.

As Clayton lined up to assume the offensive, certain now of a touchdown, Penny checked off the players on his fingers. Seven men were strung along the scrimmage line; behind them were one — two — three — four backs. There were just eleven on the team; no more.

Quickly there followed another series of plays, obviously designated by a single signal preceding the first formation. They were as regular and as rapid as watch-ticks, leaving those who waited nervously on the side-lines only an impression of a confused, swirling group of players, which presently transformed itself into a conglomerate tangle of legs and arms.

Each attempt netted a few precious yards. Wellworth fell back sullenly, battling to the last ounce of its strength, until it took its final stand in the very shadow of the goal-posts.

Suddenly Penny leaped to his feet with a cry of consternation, and stood there staring before him like a wooden Indian.

“What next?” he asked himself wildly under his breath. “What next?”

For, instead of a full team, the Wellworth eleven — misnomer for the nonce — was meeting the onrushing Clayton football machine with but ten players; just ten!

CHAPTER XV

A FAT BOY AT FULL - BACK

BUT Wellworth's luck still held. Even as the other team was crouching forward, waiting for the ball to be passed, the sharp shrill of the whistle proclaimed the period of play at an end. The first half was done, and, although Clayton had constantly threatened, it had not yet scored.

As the two teams hurried toward the dressing-room, Wayne started to follow. But Borglum held up his hand.

"You stay right here," he ordered. "Don't you suppose the boys have troubles enough now without your going in there and talking insanely about an eleven that shrinks and expands at will?"

The big guard himself limped after his team, to supervise the rubbing down of the players and to offer them the deductions of his observations based upon the first periods of the contest. Penny sat down again, with two very red spots in his

cheeks, turning a deaf ear to the steady speech of Martin.

But when play had been resumed for the third quarter, and he had carefully counted only ten Wellworth players on defense for the second time, he forced himself to interrupt Borglum's gloomy scrutiny of the game.

"Arnie," he persisted, "you must see it. You must count them again. Just this once, Arnie!"

Borglum whirled irritably. "Go away," he snarled. "I don't know what's the matter with you, freshman. But I do know that I've heard enough of your wild suspicions. Why, it would be impossible to pit twelve players against us."

"But, Arnie —"

"Oh, well, what is it? Have you counted one too many again?"

"It isn't that," confessed Wayne. Then, as he saw the brawny guard turn an expressive back upon him, he shrieked out his discovery. "Our team is trying to hold them with only ten players — only ten, I tell you. Count them yourself if you don't believe me."

While they were talking, Clayton had ploughed its way through the Wellworth team almost at

will, gaining liberally with every plunge, until the goal-posts were close. But once again, just when a touchdown seemed inevitable, there was another fumble, a mad scramble for the soggy oval of leather, and a pæan of joy from the stands when it was seen that the alert Jarvis had fallen upon it. Once more, it was Wellworth's ball.

Arnie Borglum sank to the ground with a grunt of relief. At least, the touchdown had been postponed for a time. Then he turned to Penny.

"Boy," he began, not unkindly, "you've poisoned your mind with your eternal suspicions, and your mind is deceiving your eye. This mist, or fog, or whatever it is, makes it worse. But how on earth can you explain one of our players getting lost, or mislaid, or rendered invisible? The thing's impossible, and even a freshman's common sense should tell him as much. But to humor you, I'll count the team as you suggest. If I find the total is eleven, as I know I must, I am going to send you down there near the end of the field, and refuse absolutely to allow you to speak to me again. You are getting on my nerves."

Then, while the water-boy was rushing out to freshen a fallen warrior, leaving the two teams strung out on either side of the scrimmage line,

Borglum counted slowly and methodically. As he checked them off on his fingers, he pointed out the players to Wayne. They reached the total of eleven.

"Now, freshman," concluded the youth who was in Dad Lubbock's place, "you wrap this nice red blanket about you, and toddle down there to the far-end of the side-lines. And if you so much as come near me again before the game is over, I'll send you off the grounds to the gymnasium. Is that clear?"

Reluctantly and with an air of martyrdom, Penny went his way. He knew it was useless to argue the decision. In the coach's absence, this proxy was absolute in his authority. There could be no further speech between them until after the final whistle.

The skies had darkened again. As Penny settled down in his new position, it began to rain. The ball, already slimy and muddy, became as difficult to handle as an oval of ice.

Unconvinced by the logic of Borglum, the freshman persistently resumed his counting. On the first attempt, a confusing scrimmage made him lose track. But the very fact that the team, playing on defense, was shunted back with con-

summate ease, suggested that it was yielding to superior numbers. And it was! For the third time that afternoon, he ran a calculating and careful eye over the players, and found only ten.

Even as he reached this disconcerting sum, Clayton was upon the Wellworth line, bombarding it with incessant eagerness. But suddenly, from the very midst of the straining, pushing, pulling heap, the ball itself oozed out over the heads of the players, only to be seized by the ever-alert Jarvis, who by his recoveries of fumbles was doing more for Wellworth than all the rest of the team combined.

As they lined up for the scrimmage, Penny counted rapidly. There were just eleven Wellworths. He turned to the Clayton representatives. Once more, he discovered the requisite total of a well-regulated football team. And when the play began, he realized that Wellworth was the stronger of the two, just as everybody had supposed it would prove itself to be. Under these conditions, it could win, but — It was enough to drive one mad!

On the next play, Wayne's side lost the ball on a fumble. It was so slippery now that this mishap was becoming a regular occurrence. As

the mud-coated players rose from the ground and tramped wearily to their various positions, Penny counted them idly, more from habit than because he expected to find anything amiss. Then he jumped to his feet, with every nerve tingling in protest. There were twelve players in that Clayton offensive formation!

He shook his head savagely, as he might to clear the brain after a nerve-dulling tackle. For perhaps a full minute, the result left him completely stunned. As he studied the problem, squinting through the haze at the two teams as they clashed, the revelation came to him like a flash. All that now remained was to watch keenly for the proof of his suspicions.

But the solution of this initial complexity gave way to the impossible intricacies of another. Even if he were sure of what he had seen, how was he to act? He could not carry his information to Arnie Borglum. The player-coach would have none of him. Whatever he accomplished must be on his own initiative and without the recognition or aid of the one upon whom the success or failure of the team was supposed to rest.

Out in the mire of mud, the two elevens charged and retreated, slipping, splattering through puddles

of water, and fumbling with distressing frequency. Penny crouched on one knee, waiting for the whistle that would end the quarter. He had no definite plan in mind, but in the brief breathing spell between the periods of play he meant to take some action that would preclude the further elasticity of the two teams.

As he watched, Lakers, the full-back, suddenly broke free from the tacklers, and skirted around one end toward Penny on the side-lines. The opposing defense was instantly in full cry, charging across the field at an angle that would force the runner out of bounds unless he chose to swerve and batter his way through them.

Lakers apparently had no such intention. He ran straight for Wayne, quite as if he did not know he was swinging out of bounds, and stumbled blindly over him, with the whole eager pack piling headlong upon the two.

When the officials had jerked free the tacklers, they found Lakers lying prone on the ground, with Penfield Wayne reaching beneath his back, under which the player's right arm appeared to be caught in some way. Before anybody else could speak, the freshman singled out Borglum.

"Lakers can't play any more, Arnie," he called.

Borglum looked down at them, and leaped hastily to a conclusion. "Hurt, is he? Where's Doctor Henderson?" Then he glanced along at the waiting substitutes. Dad Lubbock had told him what to do if anything happened to Lakers. "All right, Moogers," he called; "you go in at full-back."

Almost at once, the game was resumed. But before the new player could be put fairly to the test of real football, the third period ended.

The final quarter was singularly devoid of spectacular interest. There were no long runs, no wonderful tackles, no open nor trick formations of any kind. The two elevens crouched low, with shoulders hunched, rose suddenly as if a volcano had belched them forth, and tugged and strained in the quagmire of mud. Gradually, one gave way with sullen reluctance, hard pushed by the other, until the man with the ball was downed. Again and again, this style of play was repeated; in the end, its very monotony palled upon the crowd.

But there were redeeming features. For one, it was Clayton that was giving ground, and Wellworth that was forcing the other steadily down the field. For another, Wallie Moogers, at full-

back, was playing with the efficiency and the precision that had marked his practice on Thursday. It was his splendid work, indeed, coupled with the nicety with which he fitted into the well-balanced football machine, that swung the advantage to Dad Lubbock's boys; for on defense Wellworth was now presenting an impregnable barrier in its line, against which Clayton butted impotently, already sensing the subtle change.

The play was not a pretty exhibition. The teams moved with elephantine clumsiness. The slippery ball, fumbled frequently, skidded here and there, first to one eleven and then to the other; there was no depending upon its retention, no matter how substantial the gains. The players themselves sprawled and slid in the mud, and dug frantically with their cleated shoes to get under way, much as an engine-wheel whirls before it grips the rails.

But the tide had turned. Despite the mishaps and fumbles that retarded its progress, the ball moved toward Clayton territory. No longer, as Penny Wayne noted happily, was there a mysterious force that strengthened the visitors in an emergency; no longer was there any possibility of utilizing more than eleven players in crises, or of battering down a team of only ten.

It was Clayton against Wellworth now, and let the best team win! And the best team was doing it.

Even so, it took ten long, hard minutes to cross the goal line for the first touchdown. Time after time, Wellworth was upon the point of scoring, as Clayton had been earlier, only to see the elusive ball leap nimbly from the arms of the runner, squirting little jets of mud and water as it freed itself. But each time they went back to the attack undismayed, and fought valiantly until the lost ground was recovered. At the end, when they were within striking distance, Moogers was given the ball because he was the freshest, and because he had not played long enough for his jersey and jacket to become as soaked and slippery as the others'. It was he who made the touchdown, but the crowd did not know. Long before, it had given up as hopeless the task of recognizing individual players among the mud-splattered groups. But little Penny, wriggling gleefully on the side-lines, knew that Wallie carried it over.

For the final five minutes, the two teams struggled without result. Wellworth was frankly sparring for time, quite content with its advantage;

for unless Clayton could score it could not win. And it is much easier and much safer to prevent a weaker opponent from scoring on a muddy field than it is to score yourself. This truism of football, Wellworth proved again that afternoon, and when the game was over at last its players were the victors, 6 — 0.

Afterwards, in the dressing-room, there were many explanations to offer. Doctor Henderson, of the gymnasium, vouchsafed the first.

“We sent Lakers home,” he announced. “He was in no fit condition to play, and I am afraid he is going to be sick. He had a very high fever, which must have made him pretty flighty at times.”

“Oh!” said Penny Wayne suddenly. “Oh, I am glad to hear that.” Then, when they looked at him in astonishment, he flushed painfully, conscious of what they might think. “I mean,” he apologized, “that I am glad it — wasn’t — wasn’t — well, what I thought at first.”

But still they did not understand. So he told his story.

“You see, fellows,” he began, “Dad Lubbock told me we should win easily. He said we had the stronger eleven. And we had. Oh, yes, we

did, in spite of the manner in which you were pushed about during the first three periods of play. Notice, though, I say the stronger *eleven*. Why, at times, you were really playing on defense with only ten men, and Clayton was pushing you around with twelve. At first, I failed to see the connection between the two discrepancies; I didn't stop to consider that ten and twelve make twenty-two, the proper total for two elevens.

"When I did, I watched. You were all covered with mud, and the fog and mist made it difficult to distinguish one from the other. Well, I suppose it took me a minute or two to make sure I had solved the problem. Then I discovered that Lakers was aiding Clayton quite as much as he was you. Lots of times, when they had the ball and you switched to a formation for defense, he ran over to their team and played against you, making twelve against your ten."

Doctor Henderson nodded. "Poor chap!" he said. "He was out of his head half the time, I suspect, and simply wanted to get into the offensive plays because of some instinct that prompted him to follow the ball."

"Yes, you're right," admitted Parker. "I might have known, too. We discovered early that he

was not his usual steady, dependable self, and we thought it best not to use him much in carrying the ball. He was — well, Jarvis decided he was too excited to know just what he was doing.”

“But why didn’t you tell me?” demanded Arnie Borglum, facing Penny Wayne.

“I didn’t dare,” said the freshman, smiling a little. “I’d told you so many crazy things already that you had threatened to send me to the gymnasium if I advanced another suspicion.

“Well, that’s about all. Lakers broke free of the bunch, and came galloping straight at me. I suppose even then the fever must have been dulling his mind. But I — fellows, I’m heartily ashamed of it, but I thought he had turned traitor to Wellworth. When we went down in a heap, I caught his arm behind his back, to prevent his getting up, and I told Arnie here that he couldn’t play any longer. Of course, I thought I should have to explain why, but Borglum imagined he had been hurt. Moogers went in at full-back, and played as I knew he would — today. After that, you see, the eleven was always eleven strong, and we had the better team, just as everybody conceded before the game. So we won.”

There followed a long silence. Presently Borglum extended his hand to Penny.

“I owe you an apology, Wayne,” he said simply; and faced about to the others. “It seems to me, fellows,” he continued, “that we have three things to be thankful for. First, Lakers was ill and not dishonest; he need not learn from us how nearly he sacrificed the game. Second, Wellworth was the victor. Third, even if Dad Lubbock did leave a mighty poor substitute in charge of the team, we had on the side-lines about the most loyal and the pluckiest and the cleverest little worker for Wellworth any team could wish. We players didn’t win the game; Penny Wayne won it.”

It was Jarvis, the quarter-back, who relieved the embarrassing pause that ensued.

“Our next exhibit, gentlemen, is that other tiny child, Mr. Wallie Moogers. He also helped.”

And then they all laughed with unnecessary vigor, to hide their emotions, and went on with their dressing.

CHAPTER XVI

THE WINNING OF WEE WILLIE WINKLE

PROFESSOR Wordsworth, in charge of the class in English Composition I, completed the reading of the theme, and placed the paper on his desk.

"The essay I have just read," he told his freshmen students, "possesses many qualities of real literary merit. In particular, I wish to call your attention to the clear but concise style, the compact construction, and the intelligent and analytical handling of the subject. Some of you young gentlemen will do well to bear these criticisms in mind, and to profit by them in preparing the themes for tomorrow. I am sorry to report that many of you who began with great promise are allowing your work to deteriorate. That will be all for today."

Outside the lecture room, Terwilliger button-holed Penfield Wayne.

"Was that your theme he read aloud, Penny?" he asked.

"Not mine," confessed the other, flushing a little.

"I thought not," said Terwilliger bluntly. "It was too good to have been written by you. Wonder who the genius is, anyhow; maybe he gets them out of some old book. . . . What are you going to do this evening?"

"Why, I expect to see Wee Willie Winkle."

"To see him! Weren't you staring at him in the class-room just now?"

"Of course," answered Wayne patiently. One had to be very patient with Terwilliger, who seemed constantly bent upon arousing antagonism. "I was looking at his big shoulders, and wondering why he wasn't out for football. That is the reason I am going to run around to his room tonight, you know; I want to put the question to him flatly."

Terwilliger considered gravely. "He's too awkward for football, I think. Probably he knows it, too, and won't try to play because he has common sense to realize he would fail if he did."

"Dad Lubbock thinks he would make left half-back if he came out," defended Wayne. "Wee Willie told me himself he played on the

Troyville high school eleven last year — and you may recall that team won the interscholastic State championship. That means a lot, Twig. But nobody has been able to get him out for practice since he came to Wellworth. Just the same, I expect to see him tonight and thresh over the subject with him.”

But he did not. Penny's pride was touched by Professor Wordsworth's allusion to those members of English Composition I whose work had been deteriorating. At seven that evening, he shut himself up in his room and began the writing of a theme which he determined must surpass anything he had yet attempted. It promised well, and he planned to complete it in an hour; but before he was through revising and rewriting, the clock struck nine. There was nothing to do, therefore, but postpone until a later day the mission of persuading Wee Willie Winkle to report for football practice.

It was the custom, in English Composition I, for the instructor to read aloud each day the best theme submitted at the previous meeting of the class, without revealing the identity of the author. On three different occasions during the first week, Penny Wayne had listened with par-

donable pride as Professor Wordsworth offered his writings as models, and the spur to his literary ambition had enabled him to maintain this sterling average for some time. During the last few days, however, not only had he failed to have a single theme of his selected for the honor, but he was also chagrined to detect a marked similarity of style in those read to the class, that suggested they were the products of one student. Because it was not Wayne's nature to admit defeat of any kind without a struggle, he devoted the entire evening in question to the preparation of his essay for the morrow, and then tumbled sleepily into bed, with his conscience troubling him a little because of the forced neglect of Wee Willie's athletic disloyalty.

On the following day, Professor Wordsworth read another theme that Penny attributed to the mysterious author who had been responsible for so many of the recent models. It was more suggestive of a newspaper account based upon a recent happening than the others, but it possessed the same trenchant style and the same keen analysis of the subject that had marked its predecessors. Although Penny conceded its excellence, and wondered vaguely if it might not be the work of

little Wormsley, who was trying for a scholarship, he was in no sense discouraged himself. His turn would come tomorrow.

That night he called upon Wee Willie Winkle. He had never been in his classmate's room before, and he was surprised to note how small it was, and how barely furnished. There was a cot, a bureau, a tiny table, and a single chair. More would have crowded the little room.

But even more surprising than the place in which Winkle slept and studied, was the explanation which Wee Willie offered when Wayne asked him bluntly why he did not play football.

"I can't spare the time, Penny," he confessed without embarrassment. "You see, my people live on a farm. Father is making a sacrifice in allowing me to leave the work there, without attempting to supply me with any money. I am working my way through college. I do odd chores in the morning — I've the promise of three furnaces to take care of later, I wait on table at an eating club, and I manage to find enough jobs to keep me busy afternoons."

"Oh, I see!" said Penny, moistening his lips and thinking hard. "But if you had the time you'd like to play, wouldn't you?"

"Of course," agreed Winkle simply. "I like football immensely, and I play well enough, perhaps, to be of some help to the team. But those afternoon jobs pay my room-rent and buy my text-books."

"Yes, I understand," said his visitor absently. Then, abruptly, he jumped to his feet. "Why, look here, Wee Willie," he cried; "we can arrange the matter easily enough. A lot of fellows I know will chip in and make up the amount. We'll turn over to you enough money to offset what you earn afternoons, and you can put in those hours on the practice field. How about it?"

Winkle shook his head slowly. "No," he declined. "No, I can't accept money that way."

"But it needn't be — charity," persisted Penny Wayne. "Call it a loan, if you like, and pay us back when you can."

Again Winkle shook his head. "It wouldn't be quite fair," he pointed out, "either to you fellows or to me. No, Penny, I'd like to play, as I've told you, but I can't do it under those circumstances. Of course, if I could discover some way of earning enough without working afternoons —"

"That's it!" exclaimed Penny. "Why, of course you can. You and I will just sit here until

we figure out a plan, if we have to put in the whole evening at it."

"Thanks!" said Wee Willie Winkle.

Penny caught the dry humor of the other's tone. "You mean you've something else to do?" he asked. "You mean that I am keeping you from something?"

"Why, yes," admitted Winkle with his usual candor. "I have just been transformed from a waiter to a student, you know, and there are classes and lectures tomorrow. For one thing, I must get at the writing of my theme for Professor Wordsworth."

"I suppose," hazarded Penny curiously, "that you find writing themes pretty difficult. I do."

Winkle's brown eyes sparkled. "Everything that's worth while is difficult," he said. "But I seem to have a knack for original composition; that's why I am specializing in English. Professor Wordsworth has been good enough to encourage me once or twice. He — he read my theme in class today."

"Was that yours?" shouted Penny Wayne. "Why, of course it was; I might have known. Sincere, strong, courageous, clean-cut — you're just putting yourself into what you write, Winkle.

And yesterday's was yours, too; and Wednesday's, and Tuesday's, and Monday's?"

"Yes," confessed Wee Willie, very much confused now. "But I didn't mean to tell you, Penny, and — and —"

Wayne held out his hand. "Professor Wordsworth will read yours tomorrow, also," he said. "You're a better writer than I am, and I congratulate you. You'd prove a better football player, too, if you had the chance. Well, you will have it; just wait and see. I am going now, but if I can possibly find a way around this obstacle I'll let you know. I feel as if I had just begun to get acquainted with you, Winkle, and to discover that you're real man's size in a lot of ways. Good night."

"Good night," said the other, opening the door for him. "Mind the broken step near the bottom, Penny; I don't think Dad Lubbock would ever forgive me if I allowed you to trip and hurt yourself. Good night."

Under the guidance of this warning, Penny Wayne found his way safely to the outer world. But once he was clear of the house, he forgot everything else in searching for means of solving the problem that would enable his friend to report

daily for football practice. So engrossed was he with his thoughts, indeed, that he ran full-tilt into another student whom he met in the next block. It was Homer Hood, the college correspondent for one of the Chicago papers.

“Easy there, you fiery little line-plunger,” gibed Hood, catching him by the shoulders to steady himself. “Just for that, Penny Penfield, you shall come up to my room and tell me as much about the dark and mysterious inside history of the football team as you dare. Come along.”

“Not tonight,” began the freshman apologetically. “I can’t —” Then he stopped in the middle of the sentence. “Why, yes, I can, too; and I believe I can tell you something worth hearing. All right, I’ll go with you.”

Hood’s room was large and richly furnished. So marked was its contrast to Winkle’s, from which Wayne had just come, that it seemed even more luxurious than it really was. As he sank into the soft cushion-seat of a Morris chair at his host’s invitation, Penny looked quizzically into Hood’s face.

“I don’t suppose,” he said, “that you chance to know a freshman named Winkle — Wee Willie Winkle, we call him?”

Hood shook his head. "I don't remember him."

"Well, I just came from his room. It's smaller than yours, and it's less comfortably arranged. Winkle can't afford a better, for the very good reason that he is working his way through Wellworth. He's a country boy, a little awkward in appearance, perhaps, but muscular, and big-framed, and trained as trim and clean as a hound by his farm work. Dad Lubbock thinks he would make a wonderful half-back on the team, and asked me to see if I couldn't persuade him to come out for football. I called for that purpose tonight."

"That's like you," smiled Hood. "You're teaching some of us upper-classmen, who thought we were prepared to do nearly anything for the old school, what loyalty really means in actual practice. But how about this Winkle? Is he going to try for the team?"

"He can't," said Penny; "he needs what he can earn afternoons to pay his way here. If he didn't have to work during the hours the squad is out, he would be glad to play."

"If it is a question of money," began Hood, reaching into his pocket, "why, put me down for —"

"No, it's more than that. He won't accept money, either as a gift or as a loan. We must find some way for him to earn his expenses which will leave him two or three spare hours each afternoon. I suppose it is mighty cheeky of me to come to you in this way, but you have made it a bit easier by what you just said about loyalty. Hood, you 'cover' the football practice for one of the Chicago dailies, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Why do you do it?"

"Experience," said the correspondent. "I expect to take up newspaper work when I graduate."

"Then it's not for the money you earn?"

"Hardly," laughed Hood. "I send about 250 words daily, and get paid at the rate of five dollars a column. That amounts to something like a dollar a day, and —" He stopped smiling, very suddenly, and leaned forward toward his caller. "I see what you mean," he said slowly. "But that's impossible, quite impossible, Wayne. Why, this Winkle probably can't write."

"But he can," insisted Penny. "He is in my composition class under Professor Wordsworth, and he has been turning in themes that fairly

crackled with snappy English. Only this morning, the professor read one that was really a newspaper report. You couldn't have done it better yourself, with all your training."

"It's impossible," said Hood once more, "quite impossible. Even if I were able to turn this work over to him, what about myself? Still, I suppose —"

Penny leaned forward. "Perhaps you have already planned to do some other writing when you found the time," he suggested shrewdly.

"Yes, I have. I 'queried' my paper several days ago about sending in some sport articles for the Sunday issues, and the editor told me to go ahead with them. I've been putting it off because I lacked the time. The story of the practice each day doesn't interest me much, and I had already decided to ask Bob Warren if he wanted to try his hand at it."

"Well, then," said Penny, "there isn't any reason why you shouldn't make Winkle correspondent in your place."

"But why should I do this for a man I never saw?" demanded Hood. "Why —"

"You wouldn't be doing it for Winkle alone," Penny pointed out. "You'd be doing it for Dad

Lubbock, for the football squad, for the old school itself. Don't you see, Hood, it's your opportunity to prove your loyalty to Wellworth. If Winkle makes the team — and he is sure to do it — he will be your proxy; and when he begins a long run down the field with the ball, and the crowds cheer like mad for him, you'll know, down in your heart, that they are really cheering you; and when he braces for a tackle, you'll brace, somewhere up in the grandstand, and the same lump that crops up in his throat will crop up in yours; and when he downs the player with the ball, you'll tingle with a queer warmth, up there, just as he does down on the field, and you'll rub your hands together, and wipe your eyes when nobody is looking, and kick hard on the seat ahead, and maybe pinch yourself, to make sure it isn't a wonderful dream from which you may awake; and when the game is won, you won't cheer with the others, because that will seem too much like cheering yourself, until somebody pokes you with a cane and asks you if you aren't glad, and then apologizes hastily when he gets a look at your eyes and your lips."

For a long time, Hood did not speak. He turned over the log in the fire-place, and

watched it break into flames. Presently, he asked:

“Won’t it still seem a charity to Winkle? How can I make him accept the position of correspondent?”

Penny Wayne rose to his feet, and held out his hand. “It won’t be a charity,” he said, “because it is something you can use no longer, and because it is simply an opportunity for Winkle to earn for himself. Tell him you had planned to drop it before you ever heard of him; tell him you want to prove your loyalty to Wellworth that way. There could be no more clinching argument to the right kind of a fellow. And Wee Willie’s just that kind. You’ll do it, then?”

“Why, yes,” agreed Hood readily, “of course. Only —”

“Only what?”

“Only it doesn’t seem to be a sacrifice at all, after what you have said. I want to do it; I am eager to do it; I am only afraid now that something will prevent.”

“That,” said Penny, somewhat vaguely, “is because you’re the same kind of a fellow Winkle is. Now, you make it your business to see that the Chicago paper accepts him as correspondent

in your place, which will enable him to earn even more than the work he is now doing afternoons; and Wee Willie Winkle will prove his worth on the football field."

And he did. A fortnight after he reported for practice, Dad Lubbock was using him regularly at left half-back on the varsity team, and exulting over the acquisition of one of the most promising players ever developed at Wellworth. Once, indeed, he exulted aloud from the side-lines, and Penny Wayne and Homer Hood, who were standing near, grunted assent and grinned happily at each other.

But until they saw him in his first game, certain of Wellworth's alumni in Chicago had never heard of him, which they considered a little remarkable in view of the fact that their favorite newspaper published admittedly the most accurate and the best written accounts of the practice sent out from the college city.

CHAPTER XVII

THE QUITTER

ON the Monday after the Clayton game, Wallie Moogers reported for practice with a slight limp. This lameness slowed him up to such an extent that the whole team suffered. Tuesday there was no gain in his speed; nor was there improvement on Wednesday, or Thursday, or even Friday. By this time, of course, everybody from Dad Lubbock to Penfield Wayne knew that the hurt was well, and that Moogers' failure to maintain the pace he had set was due to other causes.

The back-field problem was a constant worry to the coach. Captain Parker was playing right half, and playing it well; but his real position was at tackle, where he was sorely needed to brace a wavering line. With Lakers ill for the time being, and Moogers failing as a substitute, full-back was a prize for which several candidates were striving. In the game on Saturday with Granby University, played on the latter's field,

Eidenfessel was substituted for the fat boy, after Wallie had proved conclusively that he would not do. At left half-back, Wee Willie Winkle played his first real contest with moderate success, promising even thus early to develop into a star. With this line-up, Wellworth managed to win by a score of 17 — 12 against an admittedly inferior team.

But Dad Lubbock was not satisfied. Both the offense and the defense must be strengthened. Parker was needed in the line, the weight — and the vanished skill — of Moogers was needed at full-back, and Eidenfessel needed “gingering up.” The German boy lacked an essential quality of the game; just what it was, the coach did not care to admit, even to himself. Perhaps, if he could swing him over to right half-back, in place of Parker, the change would spur him to greater activity. But until Lakers was well enough to play again, or until Moogers improved enough — if he ever did — there was nothing for Dad Lubbock to do but make the best of a very discouraging situation.

All this he explained to Wayne as the two sat together on the side-lines a week later, perhaps five minutes after the game with Needham College had begun. Needham was strong, with an evenly

balanced team; so dangerous, in fact, that Dad Lubbock had studied it in action the day Wellworth met and defeated Clayton.

"Yes, you're right," agreed Penny, wrinkling his forehead with the worry of the problem. "Well, you can count on Moogers later, but not for the next few weeks. Eidenfessel — What's the matter with his playing, Dad?"

"Watch!" commanded the coach.

Out on the field, Jarvis straightened up, the ball in his hands. The back-field rushed toward the opposing line on an angle, beginning a cross-buck play, with Eidenfessel carrying the ball. But from the outset, his interference literally ran away from him, leaving him unprotected and hesitating. He was tackled and thrown violently.

"Too slow?" asked Penny.

The coach shook his head. "Not that."

Where he had been downed, Eidenfessel lay motionless after the others had piled off. Little Jarvis, the quarter-back, prodded him gently with the toe of his cleated shoe. Both Dad Lubbock and Penny Wayne could hear his shrill entreaty.

"Get up, Petey," he snapped, "and don't play dead. You aren't hurt."

In proof of the assertion, Eidenfessel rose slowly to his feet, glowering at the earnest quarter. Penny could imagine his thoughts. What right had Jarvis to judge him? the German boy was probably arguing to himself. It was easy enough for the little fellow to call off a few numbers, bend down for the ball, and then shoot it and the players behind him into the midst of the vortex that fought about them. At full-back, Eidenfessel bore the brunt of the real attack; it was he who faced the real danger. Jarvis merely hovered on its outer fringe. . . . Now Wayne understood the weakness of his classmate.

“He’s a coward,” he told Dad Lubbock bluntly.

“I should hardly call him that,” the coach replied. “He needs seasoning to stimulate his courage. Did you ever go swimming when you were a youngster, and watch the bigger fellows dive from some high point, and shiver with fear as they did it — and then force yourself to try it once, only to discover that it meant nothing at all? Well, Eidenfessel’s like that. If he could be tossed head-first into a scrimmage, and made to understand there wasn’t any real danger, he would be one of the best players out there. As it is, he is inclined to hold back, to shirk, to —”

“To quit,” Penny finished for him. “Petey’s a quitter, I do believe. I wish I might talk to him for a few minutes!”

“Try it between halves,” suggested Dad Lubbock. “You might impress him more than I could.”

The two teams lined up again. Jarvis cast a calculating eye over his back-field, and rattled off his signal. Then he scooped suddenly at the ball the center chugged at him, passed it neatly to Eidenfessel — and the two elevens were once more writhing and struggling in a compact mass.

The full-back was tackled for a loss. Gregg, of the opposing eleven, toppled him over backward, carrying him toward Wellworth’s goal. This fact of itself proved that of the two Eidenfessel was charging the more weakly.

“Get up! Get up!” rasped Jarvis’ penetrating voice. “Afraid?”

The full-back climbed painfully to his feet, and shambled slowly into position. Parker motioned him forward, closer to the line.

The next play was around left end, with the captain carrying the ball. Eidenfessel broke quickly into the interference, apparently resolved to clear a path through which a wagon might

be driven. Instead, Wellworth's line wavered and broke, allowing Gregg to come catapulting at the German boy, head lowered, like a battering-ram. When they met, Eidenfessel fell in the very path of Parker, who tripped over him into a tackler's arms. The full-back himself was shunted out of the scrimmage altogether, and lay a half-dozen yards behind the ball.

"Up with you, Petey!" yelled the remorseless quarter-back; and Eidenfessel, shrinking and white-faced, stole into his position. On the sidelines, Dad Lubbock bit savagely at his under-lip, and Penny Wayne wriggled nervously.

It was Needham's ball now. Their wizened little quarter studied the opposing line before him, searching for its weak link, which he seemed to divine was the tackle substituting for Parker. As the coach and his freshman companion watched, the ball was snapped suddenly, and the Needham players plunged. The Wellworth line, backed for a moment by Eidenfessel, held, wavered, tightened, wavered again, and then gave way, allowing the opposing team to come crashing straight upon the defending full-back, and over him, till he lay flat on the ground, with the others pinning him down.

"He tried," said Penny hopefully.

But after this failure, Eidenfessel's playing became more cautious, and, naturally, less effective. He dodged now instead of meeting the enemy head-on. When he fell, he squirmed quickly to one side. And, once or twice, he cringed back ingloriously when a sudden, sharp, defensive movement would have meant a difference of yards. He was saving himself, Penny told the coach bitterly; saving himself at the expense of the other Wellworth players.

Jarvis, too, saw and understood. "You aren't trying, Petey," he accused, making no effort to lower his voice. "You're 'dogging' it, I tell you. Get into the plays like the rest of us."

Spurred by this accusation, Eidenfessel did better for a time. But his activity was short-lived. After Gregg had tackled him again, and he had been sucked involuntarily into an unusually vigorous scrimmage, he lapsed into his maddening lassitude, and no amount of urging on the part of Jarvis served to inspire greater effort.

After a time, the two teams zigzagged close to the side-lines. Binner, a substitute full-back, edged close to the coach, and nodded to Penny. If the boy had not lacked the necessary weight,

Dad Lubbock would have put him in Eidenfessel's place at once.

"I suppose," said Wayne to the substitute, "you'd like to be out there playing."

"Wouldn't I?" Binner exclaimed. "Why, I'd give anything in the world to have the chance."

Out on the field, Eidenfessel evidently caught the words. He jerked up his head, and stepped back, apparently on the point of retiring in favor of Binner. Little Jarvis hesitated, turning toward Dad Lubbock as if hoping for the change. But the coach neither moved nor spoke. He was afraid to sacrifice the difference in weight — and the game was still early.

"Line up, fellows," came Jarvis' insistent command. "Closer to the line, Petey; you're supposed to be playing, too, you know. Now, all together."

But it was no use. Wellworth could not gain consistently with a shirker at full-back. Three times the backs sought to penetrate the Needham line, or to circle around its ends; and three times they failed to advance the ball. Parker fell back to punt out of danger.

It was Gregg who broke through again. Eidenfessel, who should have stopped him after that,

made only a half-hearted effort, and Parker's kick was hurried and weak, carrying only some thirty yards. Then Needham began to batter its way down the field.

After the first scrimmage, an official elbowed his way to the ball, and studied its position.

"First down," he called; "ten yards to gain."

Needham bucked once more, the right half slipping between the guard and the weak tackle.

"First down," conceded the referee; "ten yards to gain."

This time it was Gregg who swept aside the inefficient tackle, as well as Eidenfessel, backing him up, and plunged through the gap for a substantial gain.

"First down; ten yards to gain."

On the side-lines, Dad Lubbock groaned. Like an echo came the throaty sigh of Penny Wayne. Out on the field, Parker hurriedly sent the tackle to right half-back on defense, and himself knelt in the line between guard and end. Instantly, it braced. The official was calling the second down now, with six yards to gain; the third, with the same distance to make; the fourth, with still a yard to go. And then, after the next scrimmage, there was measuring with the tape, and arguing,

and a comparison with the rods and chain on the side-lines, and —

“Wellworth’s ball! First down; ten yards to gain!”

Parker switched back to right half on offense, and on the first attempt carried the ball six yards beyond the line scrimmage. Eidenfessel was of little help, but even the coach lost sight of this fact in his joy over the knowledge that his team could still gain. Little Jarvis crouched low.

“9-7-5-9.”

“Signal is sixteen,” said Penny Wayne to the coach, quite as if Dad Lubbock were not aware of the key. “That’s Eidenfessel over the left guard. Now, Petey!”

But Eidenfessel had missed the signal altogether. When Jarvis swung about with the ball in his hands, and sent it toward the full-back end over end before he saw the danger, the German boy was staring stupidly at Gregg, already bursting through the line. There was a flash of yellow as the pigskin swished over his shoulder, an engulfing wave of humanity that swept all before it, and then a mad scramble for the fumbled ball.

Gregg recovered it on the bound, tucked it under his arm, and sprinted half the length of

the field for a touchdown. The score was: Needham, 6; Wellworth, 0. A cleanly kicked goal added another point for the visitors.

Back where he had fallen before the onrushing players of the other eleven, Eidenfessel lay quite motionless for a second. Both the coach and Penny watched him closely. First, he moved his right leg experimentally, as if to test whether it was hurt. Next, he straightened out the left, apparently disappointed that it was unbroken. Both arms were extended, cautiously on the initial attempt and then with angry force.

"He's looking for an excuse to quit," admitted Wayne to Dad Lubbock, "and he's sorry there is no real hurt."

By this time, little Jarvis had reached the prone figure. Something he said brought Eidenfessel to a sitting posture with a jerk, but as the player caught sight of Gregg marching toward them with the ball, to make ready for the try at goal from touchdown, he sank back on the ground.

"Perhaps he's really injured," Wayne told the coach; but down in his heart he knew his class-mate was simply seeking an excuse to be taken out of the game. After a bit, indeed, Eidenfessel rose to his feet.

Dad Lubbock turned abruptly to the eager Binner.

“Get in at full-back, boy,” he told him, “in Eidenfessel’s place.”

As the substitute raced happily out upon the field, the coach shook his head with discouragement.

“He isn’t heavy enough to play it out to the end,” he said. “Penny, we’re going to be beaten!”

CHAPTER XVIII

THE COURAGE OF EIDENFESSEL

As Eidenfessel limped miserably from the playing field to the nearest vantage point on the sidelines, honestly convinced that he had been taken from the game because of his injuries, he noted with surprise that nobody ran forward to greet him, nor to offer the supporting prop of a sturdy arm and shoulder. Quite at a loss to account for this neglect, he stared in perplexity at Dr. Henderson, from the gymnasium, who was unconcernedly watching a scrimmage and talking to Dad Lubbock beside him.

Eidenfessel sank to the ground, experiencing a twinge of pain as he bent his ankle. Yes, he was genuinely hurt. He moaned dismally, and moved his foot again. This time, strangely enough, there was no answering thrill. Through a hole in the stocking, he touched his lower shin, ready and queerly eager to twitch at the torture. There was none.

Slowly but overwhelmingly, a cold tide of apprehension began to envelop him. His mind wandered from the game itself. He could see, as clearly as if he stood at the very door, the round office of Dr. Henderson's in the gymnasium tower, with the neatly framed legend on the opposite wall, "WELLWORTH HATES A QUITTER!" If his injury had been imaginary —

"What's the matter, Eidenfessel?" asked Penny's voice over his shoulder.

Unable to think of a suitable answer, the boy on the ground merely groaned. Penny looked at him with eyes that seemed to hold little pity.

"Tell you what I'll do, Petey," he said presently. "Dr. Henderson has a good horse here. It is hitched to a sad, weary buggy, but the shay will probably hold together long enough for me to take you home in it. He told me I might use it."

Eidenfessel nodded assent. Anything was better than remaining at the game till the end, which must be followed with examinations, explanations and — and possibly denunciations. He limped through the alleyway between the "A" and "B" bleachers, with Penny marching on

before him and not offering any assistance. Back of these tiers of seats was the buggy.

They drove out of the gates at a slow trot. The big black horse was evidently eager to extend himself, but Penny held him in with taut reins. To the questions of the ticket men, the boy answered nothing definite at all, except that he was taking Eidenfessel out of the grounds — a fact that was quite evident without explanation.

With the horse still trotting under restraint, they turned sharply to the right, and then across the railroad tracks to Johnson Street. Eidenfessel caught Penny's arm.

"Look here, this isn't the shortest way home."

"I know it."

"Then where are we going?"

"Nowhere in particular."

The big horse shied crazily at a piece of wind-blown paper. Eidenfessel stiffened until the danger was past. "What's the matter, Penny? Why are you acting in this way?"

"Because," answered Wayne, choosing his words deliberately, "I want to talk to you. I want to shame you. I want to explain that Dad Lubbock and the others are calling you a quitter. Are you really hurt?"

Eidenfessel considered gravely. He was too honest by nature to tell anything but the truth. "No," he said shortly.

"Are you a coward?" continued his inquisitor.

"I — I don't know," confessed Eidenfessel wearily. "Am I?"

Of a sudden, Penny's face lost its tense look. When he spoke, his voice was sympathetic.

"Petey," he said, "do you suppose if I thought you were I should bring you out here like this and taunt you with the fact? It is because you are not a coward at heart, and because I know you are not, that I am talking to you this way."

"I — I don't know," said Eidenfessel again.

"I tell you, you are not afraid. There is no cowardice in your nature. The trouble is, you've never plunged into the midst of real danger. You don't even know how to get into it. You stand on the outside, and think about the possibilities; and by the time your real impulse to do the right thing is gone, you are undecided, and wavering, and hesitating. Dad Lubbock says that if you could be put to a crucial test, you'd meet it like a real man. He compares the football situation to divers —"

What happened came with such appalling suddenness as to defy analysis. As Eidenfessel remembered it afterwards, the dog did not run from anywhere in particular, but sprang abruptly into life by the curb and began to race alongside the fore-quarters of the black horse, barking furiously. The horse jumped, backing and thrusting forth his head so unexpectedly that the reins were torn from Penny's hands. They slipped to the ground in a twisting, snaky tangle. Next, as far as his memory served, Eidenfessel knew they had left the dog far behind. The buggy, creaking and threatening to collapse with every turn of its wheels, was spinning dizzily along Waltham Avenue, with the black horse gaining speed at every stride.

Like a parachute jumper clinging to his trapeze, Eidenfessel's strong fingers clasped the iron rods that supported the old buggy top. He cast a startled glance at the street below. It was flowing by like a terrifyingly swift, yellow river. The horse, with ears pointed back, was galloping himself into a frenzy. From somewhere near at hand, a voice was droning — why, it was Penny who was talking.

“I can pay Dr. Henderson for the buggy if

we smash it," he shouted, "but I hope nothing happens to the horse."

"Why, you are playing a joke on me," accused Eidenfessel hopefully. But another sight of the racing road beneath made him understand. It was no trick on Penny's part. It was danger. It might mean injury — or death.

"Shall we jump?" asked Wayne.

"Yes," screamed Eidenfessel. He bent over the side of the rickety buggy, bracing himself with his right foot against the dashboard. Then he began to consider. "No! Oh, no! We might be killed."

As he turned to Penny for sympathy, he noted the other's jaw set a little more firmly than usual.

"All right, Petey. We will stick, then. But you would find jumping only half as bad as it looks if you would brace and do it."

Eidenfessel hesitated. With his mind partially made up to risk a flying leap, he suddenly collapsed in the seat.

"Penny — ahead — coal wagon — we'll hit it!"

Directly in the road in front of them, with its black length broadside, stood a grimy coal wagon.

The horse had been turned parallel with the street, but the wheels and body stretched across the course of the runaway. Penny reached for the whip.

"Relax," he shouted. "If we hit it, there will be a nasty tumble."

"Penny, are — are you trying to make him go faster with that whip?"

"Impossible!" flung back the other. "No, I am going to try something else."

The wagon was now scarcely a quarter-block away. It loomed up solid and terrifying, an almost unavoidable barrier. Eidenfessel sucked in his breath in a very ecstasy of apprehension. With one hand on the dash, Penny leaned forward.

"Catch me by the coat," he commanded. "Steady me."

The full-back obeyed mechanically. Wayne leaned out over the flying hoofs, and flicked the black horse sharply on the side of the neck — once — twice. There was no apparent result.

Now they were almost upon the wagon. Eidenfessel stared at it with horror over the impending catastrophe. But Penny was not even looking at it. As coolly as if there were no danger at all,

he leaned forward a little farther and again snapped the whip along the horse's neck.

The last stroke told. The runaway lurched to the right with a jolt that threatened to upset the buggy, which grazed the bulky standing vehicle by the thinnest of safe margins. So close was the passage, in fact, that the whip was torn loose from Penny's hand.

Strangely enough, Eidenfessel began to breathe a little easier. His heart had been beating faster when they were fifty feet from the wagon than it had when they were five. He turned to his companion.

"Now what?" he asked.

"We must get safely across University Avenue up ahead," said Penny. "The real danger is there. If we are lucky, we won't hit a street-car. If we are not, —"

Cold fear gripped Eidenfessel again. His mind calculated the chances of safety. He even considered the possibilities of a safe jump.

From the side of the road, a grocer's boy rushed out, waving his hand. The black horse did not even swerve. A cry from two men on the sidewalk served only to increase his speed. A chicken squawked wildly, and fluttered to safety. Little

bumps shook and lifted the buggy as it wheeled over them. It seemed to Eidenfessel he had never traveled so fast before in all his life.

But once again, curiously enough, his fear decreased rather than increased as they neared the danger point. He even stole a quick look at Penny, and laughed a little hysterically. The tension was too great to last.

With a final burst of speed, the black horse covered the few remaining rods that separated them from the Avenue. As he dragged the buggy upon the thoroughfare, a street-car came bowling along from the west, moving so rapidly that it rocked from side to side. A collision of some kind was inevitable. Either they must crash into the car, or the car must crash into them.

Utterly without reason, Eidenfessel's mind became suddenly calm. He watched the horse, newly frightened, leap upon the car track, clear it at a bound, and attempt to pull the buggy free. He caught the grimace of wondering fear on the face of the motorman, who wrenched desperately at the brake. He heard a woman on the walk scream out in fright. Then —

There was a mighty crash. Rickety buggy and Penny and he were all tossed into the air.

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Bands blared. Volcanoes belched their lava. Kaleidoscopes spilled their colors over the whole world. Sky and earth slid from their proper places. Or so it seemed to Eidenfessel.

When the whirling lights lifted from before his eyes, he found himself standing knee-deep in the ruins of the buggy. The car was grinding to a stop a few yards away. With the shafts dragging, the black horse was already a block distant, still galloping madly.

He paused irresolutely, half-dazed. But the quick, insistent clanging of a gong claimed his attention. Down the road, coming as only such teams do, rushed the light chemical fire-engine of the city, drawn by two charging horses.

He looked about him. The ruins of the buggy clogged one side of the street. The car that had hit it, now at a standstill, barred the center. Only on the left side, toward which the driver was urging his racing steeds, was there space for the passage of the engine. And in this path lay Penny Wayne on his back, motionless, white-faced, with a little trickle of blood oozing from his head.

Clang! Clang! Clang! warned the bell. But to Eidenfessel it was a beckoning call. He was

not afraid. He did not hesitate. The great moment had come when he must plunge into danger without stopping to calculate the costs. He met it without flinching.

With a leap, he was free from the wreckage of the buggy. Six steps carried him to Penny's side. As he knelt, he could hear the hoof-beats closing in. There was no need to wonder why the driver had not stopped, for the thing was an impossibility.

As he lifted the boy from the ground, he felt him stir in his arms. At least, Penny was not dead. Then, as the hoofs seemed to leap for him, he pushed his burden clear, and scrambled for safety himself.

Something hit him. He felt a sharp pain in his head and another in his stomach. Then the world went black before his eyes.

A few seconds later, Eidenfessel looked up wonderingly into the face of somebody who was kneeling over him. It was that of a middle-aged man with black whiskers, who seemed to dominate the circle gaping at the football player. He was prodding the German boy's body.

"Ah, sir," he said, as he saw the other open his eyes, "I was just examining you."

Eidenfessel pushed him away, and leaped to his feet. "Penny! Oh, Penny!"

"All right, Petey!" Wayne's voice was a little odd and shaky. Eidenfessel found him leaning against a store window, surrounded by an army of small boys. He was white and trembling. Before the other could say more, he pointed exultantly up the street, where the black horse that had run away with them was being led by a hostler.

"Not a scratch on him," he declared. "The man is taking him to Dr. Henderson's barn now, one of these youngsters tells me. Are you hurt?"

Eidenfessel shook his head. "Of course not," he declared. "Penny, can you run? Come on, then."

"But, young man," shouted the black-whiskered person as the two swung off in an even stride, "I —"

"I think," said Eidenfessel gravely, "that he is a doctor, yes, who wants a fee for examination. Shall I call him for you?"

"I'm not hurt," gasped Penny. "I am willing to run, too. But where are — are you going?"

Eidenfessel's teeth were set. "I've found out something. Nothing is as bad as it seems from

the outskirts. I was afraid when the horse shied at a piece of paper. I was no more afraid than that when we nearly hit the wagon. I was less afraid when the car smashed us. I wasn't afraid at all when I saw the chemical engine coming for you. I had been into danger tossed, like you said. I am *not* a coward, and I am going back to Camp Randall to ask Dad Lubbock if I may play the last quarter. . . . Let's jump that meat wagon for a ride."

CHAPTER XIX

BACK INTO THE GAME

WAYNE and Eidenfessel reached the playing field just in time to witness the final scrimmage of the third quarter. Binner, looking rather the worse for wear, had been given the ball, and was circling left end when Gregg tackled and threw him. As they went down together, the whistle shrilled the conclusion of the period.

"Yes," Dad Lubbock was saying to Henderson, the gymnasium director, "Binner lacks the stamina to go at top speed for a full game. He has played himself out already, and there is nobody left to take his place except Marsh there, who is also too light. But he must go in."

"No, sir," panted Eidenfessel over the coach's shoulder, "Marsh will go in, no. I will play full-back myself."

Dad Lubbock looked in astonishment from the speaker to Penny. The latter nodded solemnly.

"Yes, Dad, let him play the last quarter. The

rules will allow you to put him in at the beginning of the period."

"But —"

"It's like this," explained Penny hurriedly. There was little time in which the coach could make his decision. "You see, Eidenfessel climbed up to that high point from which the big boys were diving, and forced himself to try it. Now, it's nothing at all to him. Do you understand?"

Dad Lubbock was by no means certain that he did, although he recalled his earlier comment about stimulating Eidenfessel's courage. But one point he recognized clearly. Penfield Wayne was asking him to give the German boy another trial, and, because the coach had come to rely so much upon the freshman's loyal aid, he agreed without further argument. So, when the minute's intermission ended, Eidenfessel went into the game again as Wellworth's full-back.

The play began. Presently, the wizened quarterback of the visiting team gave Gregg the ball for a line-plunge. Eidenfessel met him half-way, and tackled fearlessly before the runner could ward him off with his open hand. They thudded to earth like sand-bags from a soaring balloon.

“Get up, Petey —”

Little Jarvis broke short his imperious command with a gasp of astonishment that caused Penny, squatting over on the side-lines by Dad Lubbock's side, to chuckle loudly. Eidenfessel was already in position, and the player on the ground was Gregg.

Twice more Needham hurled its runners against the line that had heretofore crumbled at will; twice more it sagged and wavered as if about to break, only to tauten into a veritable stone wall of impregnable defense. It was Eidenfessel, playing back of it, who was the master of the situation; it was he who threw his ponderous weight against the impact, timing his braces to the second, and leaping forward with the exultant surety of one who has only a single purpose in mind.

In four downs — the last a “fake” kick thwarted by the German boy at full-back — Needham failed to gain a yard. When the ball changed hands, and while little Jarvis still sat jealously upon it until Moody, at center, could straddle the oval, Eidenfessel lined up, snuffing the approaching scrimmage with dilated nostrils, and spat forth a venomous:

“Signal!”

Even from where he sat, Penny could see the amazement of Jarvis, who blinked wonderingly at the change that had come over his full-back. Apparently fearful lest it should prove a whim of the moment, he rushed his players into place.

“6-9-4-1,” he yelled.

The signal was fifteen. Fifteen sent Eidenfessel between left tackle and guard. Before the ball was fairly off the ground, the backs were in motion, and Jarvis had swung the oval hard into the pit of the full-back's stomach. Although the German boy gasped, as if from pain, there was no lessening of his forward rush. The half who led the interference, Parker, had wedged open a slight gap, just enough to give leverage for a runner; and Eidenfessel crashed into it as a street-car at top speed might crash into a light carriage — into it, through it, and away from it on the far side, with Gregg hanging to his moleskins and being dragged until other tacklers could reach them. It was a ten-yard gain.

“Line up, already,” called Eidenfessel. “Line up, Jarvis, quick!”

And Jarvis, who during the first quarter of

play had nagged the other constantly in this manner, made no retort. Something had transformed his full-back into the most eager and helpful one of the whole eleven.

The next play was around left end, with Parker carrying the ball. Eidenfessel was off like a flash, treading hard upon Wee Willie Winkle's heels, and fairly shoving him against the out-playing end of the Needham team. He veered suddenly himself, and shouldered aside the opposing tackle, going down with him. But as he fell, he caught the sweep of air from the runner with the ball, and knew that he had swished past in safety. As a matter of fact, he had cleared a space through which a wagon might have driven.

He did not rise immediately. Out on the sidelines, Penny's finger-nails cut into the palms of his hands, and the coach coughed loudly in clearing his throat. Was the full-back to quit again?

But they need not have worried. Little Jarvis, the former inquisitor, ran anxiously to the player's side, and stooped over him.

"Hurt, Petey?" he asked gently.

Eidenfessel leaped to his feet. "'Hurt'?" he echoed in a voice that carried far. "Well, I

should say not. Keep the others going, Jarvie. We'll get them yet."

Whereat, the coach, turning away from Penny Wayne, looked down the field at the looming goal-posts toward which his team had been moving, and laughed like a school boy.

Wellworth gained again, thanks to the full-back's efficient aid; and again, and still again. When they halted for a breathing spell, the ball was on the enemy's last chalk-line. Needham's quarter-back was frantic now, and he danced about excitedly, shifting his players here and there to secure a stronger defense.

For a single down, no more, his shifts accomplished their purpose, and Wellworth did not advance. But on the next play, Eidenfessel cut through the line with the ball, mowing down tacklers as a gigantic scythe might have done, and scored the touchdown.

Over at the side of the playing field, Dad Lubbock rose to his feet, and shook hands with Penny Wayne.

" "He dived," " quoted the man, remembering the queer way in which the boy had told him of Eidenfessel's change of heart, " "and now it's nothing at all to him.' "

Parker kicked goal, adding another point. Up in the stands, the Wellworth rooters repeated again and again the varsity yell, encouraged among others by the vociferous Terwilliger as a cheer-leader; and the band blared forth into an air of triumph. It was not victory, to be sure; but neither was it defeat. The score was now: Needham, 7; Wellworth, 7. And there were still a few precious minutes to play.

Eidenfessel was very tired. His head throbbed with an ache, and his stomach tingled queerly, quite as if he had been hurt. Too many adventures had been crowded into the last hour to leave him full master of himself. But in spite of his weariness and real or fancied pain, he had no thought of giving up. In the scrimmages that followed, he played with every ounce of vigor and dash at his command.

Perhaps three minutes later, when it seemed to him he could stand no longer, there came a fumble. Curiously enough, it was Gregg, of the Needham team, who missed the signal this time, and it was Eidenfessel, of the Wellworth, who recovered the ball.

Instinct alone prompted him to tuck it properly in his armpit, with his hand cramming it there,

and the muscles of his arm swelling along its rough cover. For a fraction of a second, he hesitated, a little dazed and uncertain as to what he should do next. Then understanding came. He lowered his head and charged for the white goal-posts ahead, apparently miles away.

A ghost-like form rose before him. He pressed the palm of his free hand against a warm, sweaty face, and the tackler fell backward and to one side. Another dived at him, caught frantically at the moleskins encasing his thighs, and was shaken off like a rat. A third ran straight for him, launching himself through the air, with only the tip of his shoe dragging to make the tackle fair; but Eidenfessel dodged quickly, and the other's finger-tips merely scratched down his leg. After that, there was an open space, where he ran over three chalk-lines on the field, watching them warily that they might not rise and trip him in some treacherous fashion.

Before him stretched a deserted gridiron to the very goal-posts — no, not quite deserted, either; for from the left a tackler was running at an angle that must invariably bring them together within the next twenty yards. In Eidenfessel's weary eyes, he loomed hopelessly grim and

forbidding. He could never pass him. Why, it was ridiculous to expect that he could bowl over anybody without help, or even escape without being downed himself. He —

His sight cleared. The face of the onrushing tackler grew more distinct. For the first time, Eidenfessel recognized his enemy, and laughed in a very ecstasy of relief. It was only Gregg!

The two met on the twenty-yard line. Gregg tackled with disconcerting accuracy and power just above the knees, but his fingers found only a frail hold. Even so, the shock threatened to topple over Eidenfessel. But now, as had been the case since his return from the adventures outside Camp Randall, he was a better player than Gregg, and a stronger, and a more courageous. In the first quarter, perhaps, he would have given way before the tackle, and conceded defeat; but now that he was unafraid, and quite sure of himself, he only braced until he could right his falling body. Then he whirled suddenly, with every muscle responding, and lifted the Needham player clear from the ground, as school boys do the unlucky "snapper" in the good old game of "crack-the-whip."

Gregg held with the tenacity of despair. But

the moleskin pants offered no secure hold, and the impetus of the swing was tearing him loose. His fingers slipped at last, and he sailed ten feet away, where he landed in a queer little heap.

Eidenfessel stifled an insane desire to follow the man and laugh at his sorry plight, which seemed to the full-back the funniest thing he had ever known. But there was other business to do; an end to be attained. He raced on to the padded white posts, crossed the goal-line beneath the connecting cross-bar, and dropped to the ground, clinging to the ball as if he feared it would be taken from him. As the others rushed to his side, the whistle blew. The game was over — and won.

Afterward, when he was trying to walk without swaying, Penny Wayne flung an arm about his shoulders.

“I’m glad, Petey,” he said, “that you proved yourself. Dad Lubbock and I were a little worried — ”

“I know,” interrupted Eidenfessel, “but I am cured now. You needn’t worry any more.”

Then Doctor Henderson came up and dug him playfully in the ribs. Eidenfessel winced at this, and the gymnasium director ran his sensi-

tive hands over the boy's body, halting them suspiciously near the stomach. A brief examination was enough.

"You're hurt," he said. "There is an ugly bruise and possibly a fractured floating rib." He glanced from the full-back's wondering eyes to his head. "Yes, and you have a scalp wound, too. How do you explain them?"

"I don't know," confessed Eidenfessel in all sincerity. "Why, I didn't even know I was hurt."

"They aren't football injuries," explained Penny Wayne gravely. "He and I met with some adventures while the game was going on — a runaway, a smash-up with a street-car, a — Well, Petey Eidenfessel here saved my life by dragging me out of the path of a fire-engine, but didn't get quite clear of the horses' hoofs himself. That's how he was hurt."

"And he must have played the last quarter with a throbbing head and a paining body," said Jarvis, who had joined the group. "Why, I — I thought he was a coward, and just the same as told him so."

"A coward?" exclaimed Dad Lubbock. "Why, Eidenfessel never hesitated, nor flinched, nor

thought of quitting all through that last period. He's on the team to stay."

"A coward?" echoed Penny Wayne, smiling up into Eidenfessel's glad eyes. "He's anything but that!"

CHAPTER XX

THE SUSPICIONS OF TERWILLIGER

"It isn't fair!" complained Terwilliger bitterly, throwing himself into one of the chairs in Wayne's room.

Penny smiled to himself, and marked in his Latin translation the point at which he had been interrupted. His caller shuffled uneasily with his feet.

"Out with it, Twig," urged Penny. "Who or what is the subject of your present suspicions?"

Terwilliger had the grace to flush. "I expected you to laugh at me," he declared. "Nobody seems to sympathize when a fellow's in trouble."

"In trouble? I beg your pardon. What is it?"

"It's that inter-class race the day before Thanksgiving," admitted Terwilliger. "We had our trial to choose the runners, just as the other classes did. And now Clabby says we must run it over again. Is that fair?"

"Isn't it?" countered Wayne. "You know what happened in the trial. Most of us took the wrong road altogether, and it was practically impossible to select the winners."

"I didn't get off the course," flared Terwilliger, "and I won. Now, didn't I?"

"Yes," conceded Penny, "and —"

"And you finished second. Now, didn't you?"

"But I was one of the crowd that took the wrong road."

"Well, what if you did?" argued Terwilliger. "You came in second, and I don't believe your way was a single step shorter. I came in first. Now, do you know why Clabby didn't select us two to represent the freshman class in the race itself?"

"Because," explained Penny patiently, "the trial was not truly run. We went by different routes."

"Nonsense!" snorted Terwilliger, kicking out contemptuously with his long legs. "Do you know who finished third?"

"Yes," admitted Wayne; "it was Clabby's younger brother."

"Exactly! Well, he might win or be second if he had another opportunity. So Mr. Clabby pretends he couldn't pick the best two runners from

that race, and asks us to try it again. It's a trick, I tell you; a despicable, underhand trick."

"Twig," said Penny earnestly, "your suspicions are ruining your character. You're losing your sunny nature, and you're developing into a mighty disagreeable sort of a fellow. Clabby is one of the instructors at the gymnasium, as you know, and he's as straight as a string, I'm sure."

"Prove it," taunted Terwilliger, scowling hard at the carpet.

"I can do it in two ways. First, he told me only this morning that inasmuch as you finished first and took the right road, he had decided to make you one of the freshman runners and excuse you from the new trial."

For a moment, Terwilliger had no answer ready. With his own position assured, Penny hoped his classmate would concede the fairness of the man who had been placed in charge of the runners. But the other was still dissatisfied.

"He was forced into the decision, I suppose," he said surlily. "But the trial is to be run over again, isn't it? And you and young Clabby are to compete, aren't you, in spite of the fact that you beat him the other time as squarely as anybody could wish?"

"If I am the better runner, I can beat him again."

"With a fair race, yes. But they will put up some trick on you, mark my words, and —"

"Twig," said Penny, "you are unjust to yourself and to Coach Clabby. I don't want to preach, but your constant suspicions are sadly warping your nature. We have argued the matter enough already, and you have demanded proof other than mere words. Well, here is a chance to put it to the test. I shall agree to the special trial run tomorrow afternoon to decide upon the other member of our team. We go the full course, and I expect to win. If I do, and if the coach selects me instead of his brother, will it restore your faith in humanity? Will you promise me to fight back your ugly suspicions hereafter and become the sunny, optimistic chap you should be?"

"If you are chosen as my team-mate for the big race," agreed Terwilliger solemnly, "I won't utter another suspicion this year. But you will discover —"

"— whatever I may," Wayne laughed lightly. "Mind you, Twig, after it's all over, I shall listen to no excuses, and I shall offer none. Even Coach Clabby insists upon a decisive result this time,

and has made us promise to abide by the trial, no matter what occur."

"I understand," said Terwilliger. "And, if young Clabby is chosen over you, I am going to withdraw and force the coach to put you in my place."

Before Penny could protest, the door swung shut behind the suspicious freshman, and he was gone. From the window, Wayne watched him with worried eyes as he crossed the lower campus.

"Why, he mustn't do that," he told himself. "It will ruin his chances for the track team next spring." Then he smiled at the simple solution of the problem. "If I win this trial," he reflected, "Terwilliger will not only have been taught a sound lesson about baseless suspicion, but he will be my team-mate when the big race is finally run. I must win tomorrow for his sake."

On the following afternoon, when Penny emerged from the gymnasium upon the lower campus, he found the grounds crowded with students anxious to watch the start. The race itself was a combination of the regulation cross-country run and the modified Marathon, and there were four entrants for this preliminary trial. But the real competition, as all knew, lay between

young Clabby and Penny Wayne. Brown and Jordan, the two others, were admittedly inferior, and had elected to run simply to test their speed and endurance in preparation for track work in the spring.

The football season was in its last month, with a string of unbroken victories for Wellworth. Because Wayne hoped to be a member of the track team during the second semester, Dad Lubbock had urged him to enter for the inter-class race.

The start was prosaic enough. They did not dig holes in the track for their toes, and crouch with hands touching the ground, as they might have done on the cinder course for a short dash. An official merely lined them abreast, asked in an unnecessarily loud voice if they were ready, and fired his revolver. The race was on.

Brown and Jordan took the lead in the first hundred yards, eager to make a good showing while their strength lasted. Clabby and Wayne followed close upon their heels, running side by side and watching each other narrowly. And so the four swept out of sight of the crowd as they jogged far down the straightaway road that marked the initial mile.

For twice that distance, there was no material

change in their relative positions. Then came a sharp up-grade, where the country drive climbed the side of a hill. The two leaders took it without a change of pace, but before they were half-way to the top Penny saw them faltering. Jordan was leaning too far forward, and stumbling. Brown's heels jarred him with every step. Wayne himself was running easily, taking his full weight on the balls of his feet, and regulating his breathing with every thought insistent upon the preservation of all possible strength and wind for what was still to come. But Clabby, by his side, was also nursing his powers with consummate skill.

They reached the summit, trotted across the fifty feet of level road, and struck the descent upon the other side. His practice and training as a member of the football squad had made Wayne certain of his ability and endurance, and he quickened his stride into a semi-spurt. Half-way to the little valley below, he began to forge to the front; twenty yards from it, he was on even terms with Brown and Jordan, both red of face and puffing distressfully; at the bottom, he was leading them all, smiling confidently, and now sure of the ultimate result.

As the road straightened out level again, he

slackened speed, satisfied with the gain he had made. Almost instantly, his ear caught the pit-a-pat of footsteps behind him, ever coming closer; and, before he could resume his old stride, Clabby swept past, running as easily as if it were merely play for him. The victory was by no means assured.

Wayne set his teeth, lowered his head, and put additional force into his legs. Already, in spite of his splendid condition, the strain was beginning to tell. For the first time, he became conscious of the jerky play of his muscles, which had heretofore moved with the frictionless efficiency of a well-oiled machine. His breathing was not as regular as it had been. Little wisps of hair blew down over his eyes, and lay wet and sticky on his perspiring forehead. And the race was not half over!

He hung doggedly upon Clabby's heels. Once, indeed, the toe of his running shoe tickled the other racer, and made him falter for a moment. After that, Penny swung to the other side of the road, following the path of the deep wheel-rut.

For a mile or more, they ran within a yard of each other. Back of them, lost somewhere in the tortuous windings of the track, Brown and Jordan

were stumbling forward, always falling farther and farther behind, but forgetting the pair ahead of them in the keen exhilaration of their own struggle for supremacy. It was as if two races were being run, one behind the other.

Three miles from the finish, Wayne began to increase his stride. He was not ready to sprint; for a long race, even if it falls short of the Marathon distance, saps a runner's vitality till his only ambition is to finish; trotting, staggering, even walking, if need be — but still finishing. The sudden acceleration of speed on Penny's part, therefore, was merely a challenge. Perhaps he could draw out that reserve strength his opponent was obviously husbanding.

Foot by foot, inch by inch, he crept ahead. Then, behind him, Clabby laughed. Even without turning his head, Wayne knew that the other was coming like the wind. Piqued by the sudden loss of the lead, Clabby was forgetting everything save the satisfaction he would experience in proving that he could go to the front when he liked.

Immediately, Wayne resumed his former pace: that steady, easy, ground-covering step-and-recovery he had maintained during the other trial. From the corner of his eye, he watched gloatingly

as Clabby reached his side and spurted past him, flinging back into his face a boyish laugh and a careless dare of six words — six words, mark you, of wasted breath when breath was as precious as gold!

Clabby's was a false and ill-calculated spurt; Penny knew this instantly. Now if he would only keep it up, he must assuredly endanger his chances of winning by running himself out three miles from the finishing line.

Clabby did keep it up. When he swung out of sight around the next curve, he was fifty yards ahead; when Wayne caught another glimpse of him, he was still further in the lead — and tiring himself tremendously in his futile sprint.

Penny fought back the insane desire to close the gap. He knew he could do it easily enough, but just at this time it would be folly. Later, when the other began to tire, as he surely must do under the strain of such a pace, it would be comparatively simple to regain the yards that were now threatening his chances of success. No human being could hope to run long as Clabby was running. So Penny jogged contentedly in the rear, with a song in his heart, reserving whatever strength he might for the last cruel mile.

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Presently the road curved through a little clump of trees, and began to wind downhill. Wayne recalled that there were three groves, and that the last, on the Collins farm, was just two miles from the finish; from victory. After he had crossed the little bridge over the gully, he expected to begin the final grind that was to wear down the lead until he overcame it altogether.

He emerged from the shade of the low-hanging branches out into the bright sunlight. Ahead of him, perhaps a quarter-mile, loomed the second grove. Fixing his eyes upon it, as a weary traveler in the desert does upon a green oasis, he jogged steadily and evenly until he reached the objective point. Then, breathing deep of the cool autumn air, and stamping hard upon the moist ground, he threw back his shoulders and focused his glance upon the woods of the Collins farm.

"After I pass over the bridge," he thought, "I will go on and catch him. I must win!"

But when he reached the very middle of the little span, he threw up his head with a sudden listening gesture. Were his nerves playing him false? Or had he really heard a faint cry? Then, as he ran noiselessly on the toes of his feet, he caught the sound again. It was no figment of his

imagination, but a shout from beneath the bridge. He slowed until he heard it the third time.

“Hulloo! Hulloo, up there!”

It was the voice of Coach Clabby, the man in charge of this trial race, the older brother of the runner now leading.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CROSS - COUNTRY RACE

WAYNE did not stop at once. For perhaps a half-dozen strides, while his mind questioned, he kept to his pace. The loss of even a minute at this crucial time might change the whole aspect of the race — and the winning meant much more than the superficial victory! Suppose it were some trick to delay him; suppose — He shook his head savagely, thoroughly angry with himself. He was growing as suspicious as Terwilliger, whose trust and faith in mankind he was endeavoring to restore. With set lips and clenched fists, he came to a standstill, and walked quickly back upon the bridge.

Leaning over the frail hand-rail, he peered blinking into the little gully beneath. At first he could see nothing in the twilight of the heavily shaded spot. But presently, as his eyes grew accustomed to the semi-darkness, he made out the form of Coach Clabby, sitting at the very edge of the tiny brook.

The sight of the man filled Penny with a blazing fury. He smothered a sudden angry impulse to turn without speaking and resume his race. Perhaps it was not yet too late to hope he might be equal to the task of overtaking and passing his opponent. He gripped the rail with quivering fingers.

"What's the matter?" he called in a curiously uneven voice.

"I've turned my ankle," the coach shouted back. "The front fork of my bicycle frame broke and threw me. The injury is slight, but I cannot climb out of here, nor walk to town. Will you please send me a carriage?"

"Yes," promised the boy, his mind in a turmoil. "Yes, Mr. Clabby."

For the first time, apparently, the coach seemed to note the identity of the person on the bridge. "Why, Penny!" he exclaimed. "I did not know it was you. I—I did not mean to stop you, of course. Go on with your race, and send out a carriage for me when you are done. Don't stop—keep running, I tell you!"

Wayne turned silently and sprinted away. After all, there was nothing he could do if he picked his way down to the coach; he could serve best, he

decided quickly, by summoning the desired aid when he finished the race.

It took him a minute or more to relax his muscles, which had stiffened slightly. As he reached the brow of the little hill on the other side of the bridge, the road stretched out before him in a long, straight line. Despite the delay, he had hoped to sight the other runner at this point, and the discovery that the track lay utterly deserted shocked and frightened him. He stumbled, caught himself just in time, and burst into a frenzied chaos of form, chopping short his stride, jerking his arms spasmodically, and sucking in dust through his open mouth.

But presently his mind cleared again, and he forced from it the ugly thoughts that had been welling up unchecked. He must resist the temptation to spurt; he must fight with both brain and muscle to regain and hold that long, measured stride, never varying it to the end. Only by the ceaseless torture of steady progress could he hope to finish at all.

His throat was dry and parched. His lips flecked "cotton." The cords and tendons of his legs cried for rest. He was no longer able to hit the ground upon the balls of his feet, and when his heels came

down jarringly it shook him to his very neck. Little pebbles caught the toes of his shoes, and sought to trip him; clinging serpents of grass entwined his ankles, and cut and held; and, more and more often with every curve of the road, the uneven surface threw him first one way and then the other, with ominous threats of twist or sprain.

He staggered blindly up the next incline. Far ahead — it seemed miles and miles to the fore — he could distinguish young Clabby, still running with apparent strength and confidence. But Penny did not give up. He must win! As he ran, the refrain of the thought ding-donged in his brain, a word for every forward step: "I — must — win! — Yes, — I — must — win!" A hundred times he repeated it in his mind; a thousand. It echoed in his ears like a funeral dirge.

A mile from the finish, he raised his drooping head and looked fearfully to the front. He had gained, but it was such a pitifully tiny advantage that it promised little. He could never reach Clabby unless that runner weakened. Weakened! Ah, there was the chance. Was his opponent staggering, too, or was it merely a fantasy of hope?

But a little later, as he stared hard at the figure ahead, he knew he had seen sanely. Clabby was

faltering; fighting against the weariness of his foolish sprint, but steadily losing ground. Closer and closer drew the two. Wayne found himself wondering if he were really advancing, or if the world were topsy-turvy, spinning Clabby back to him. He laughed, but there was no mirth in the sound.

Now he was gaining fast. Why, surely he could pass him before long. . . . Then a building loomed up at the side of the road, and another, and still another. Farther ahead was a curious buzzing, such as bees make in swarming. Suddenly, he understood. He was entering the little college city. The noise was cheering. There, six blocks away, was the lower campus. And Clabby still led!

His eyes were half closed; he could barely see. When he lifted a protesting leg, it weighed as much as his whole body. Sometimes, too, the flat road lurched up toward his face, and he stepped ludicrously high to avoid it. He had forgotten all about swinging his arms, and running on his toes, and breathing normally. He realized only his stubborn determination to win. Win! That was it!

The last block was an inferno. Scores of howl-

ing madmen ran by his side, and cheered and begged and threatened. Some of them were dressed in sober black; some wore stripes and checks and cardinal sweaters; one, curiously enough, was a tall figure with short, knee-length, flapping white pants. . . . Why, that was Clabby, and Clabby was at his very side.

Somewhere in his sturdy frame, or in his stout heart, there was a single ounce of reserve power. As a singer husbands her highest note for some supreme moment, he had been miserly treasuring that ounce. Now he brought it forth. For just a space as long as a man's body, it fed his dying strength. For inches, it carried him forward. But at the end of that space was the finishing line.

Later — it seemed hours afterwards, but it must have been only seconds, for the crowd was still howling like maniacs — he opened his dirt encrusted eyes. Somebody's arm, thrown protectingly about his shoulders, was steadying him as he swayed uncertainly.

"Who — who won?" he asked, forcing out the words through parched lips.

"You!" shouted Terwilliger's voice, very exultant and very proud. "You beat him a long ways — oh ten inches, at the least!"



“Who — who won?” he asked, forcing out the words through parched lips. *Page 266.*

An hour later, as Wayne and Terwilliger sat talking in the former's room, somebody called from beneath the window facing the street. Penny leaned out.

"It's Coach Clabby in the carriage we sent for him," he told Terwilliger.

They walked silently down the stairs and out to the curb. It was not a time for speech.

"Penny," greeted the coach, "I want to say, first of all, that the result of this trial race is not to govern my selection of a runner for the inter-class event."

"But you said," began the boy, utterly bewildered, "that we were to abide —"

"Yes, I know," interrupted Clabby, "but there are other things to be taken into consideration. And now I want to assure you once more that I had no idea it was you to whom I called from under that bridge. It was growing late in the afternoon, and that particular road is little traveled. I heard footsteps, and I called to whomever might be passing. Now that you understand, I am sure you will accept my apology."

"Why, yes, sir," said Penny dully. His whole air-castle was tumbling to the ground. "Yes, sir, but —"

"Of course," went on the coach, "I sent you on with your race just as soon as I discovered your identity. But you had lost too much time. You understand, don't you, that I cannot in justice to you do anything other than refuse to consider the result a fair test. You couldn't be expected to beat my brother after I had delayed you in the manner I did."

Penny Wayne leaned excitedly toward the man. "Mr. Clabby," he cried, "you are the one who doesn't understand. Why, I did beat him! I beat him by inches, sir! He — he ran a good race, but I won."

The coach looked wonderingly at the boy. Penny was nodding his head vigorously, as if to drive home the truth. Then the man turned to Terwilliger, who bobbed his affirmation. The coach's eyes sparkled.

"I am glad you did," he said simply. "That means you must have run a wonderful race. You will push Terwilliger hard in the inter-class event."

"He'll beat me," declared that youth, "and he'll win from the others, too. Why, Penny Penfield is —" And his very optimism robbed him of words with which to laud his friend.

"I am glad, too," continued the man, "for an-

other reason. After I had stopped you, I realized the interpretation that might be placed upon my action, and I worried over the fear that you would distrust my motive. It would have been a foolish suspicion, of course."

It was Terwilliger who answered him. "Very foolish, sir," he agreed gravely. "The fellow who is suspicious of everybody and everything is pretty miserable. Penny Penfield isn't that sort, I can assure you."

"Neither is Terwilliger," said Wayne, grinning up into his classmate's face, "— now!"

CHAPTER XXII

THE MUD - LARK OF THE TEAM

DAD LUBBOCK sat in the gymnasium office, watching idly the rain that beat down upon the lower campus. It was the day of the last football game of the regular season, and that afternoon Wellworth was to meet the fastest and most successful of its rivals, Union College. The morning had dawned cloudy and warm, with the air sticky and muggy. About mid-forenoon, a black cloud grew ominously in the east, and within an hour the college city was dripping wet from a heavy shower that left a path of mud in its wake.

As the coach studied the sky with a critical eye, the door behind burst open, and there entered a dripping, mud-spattered figure. It was Wallie Moogers. His shoes squashed and oozed water at every step, and little trickles flowed down the valleys of his moon face. But his eyes were alight with a fire that made it clear he did not understand his sorry appearance.

"Mr. Lubbock," he began abruptly, "it's raining."

The coach nodded assent.

"The playing field will be muddy," continued Moogers.

"It often is when rained upon," admitted Dad Lubbock. But the sarcasm missed fire entirely.

"You don't understand what I mean," protested Wally shrilly. "Lakers can't run well in the mud."

The coach sat up very straight in his chair. A tiny line creased his forehead. Until this time, the only game played on a heavy field was the one with Clayton, which he had not witnessed, and by which Lakers could not be judged.

"How do you know?" he demanded. "Ever see him try it, other than the day when he was coming down with a fever?"

"No-o," confessed Moogers. "But Penny Wayne says he won't be as fast in the mud, even compared to the others, as on the dry. You see, sir, he isn't built for it."

Dad Lubbock rose to his feet, and placed his hands on the fat boy's shoulders. "Wallie," he said earnestly, "are you sure you know what you are saying?"

"Yes, sir," declared Moogers confidently. "People, sir, are a lot like horses in that respect. Some horses are as fast as the wind on a dry road, but lack endurance. They're like Lakers. Well, sir, try them in the deep mud, and they flounder about and are beaten by the slower, heavier-gaited animals."

"Like you," supplemented the coach dryly, suddenly perceiving the drift of the conversation.

"Yes, sir, like me," agreed Wallie Moogers, without flinching. "Do you remember the first practice in which I held my own? It was in the mud. And the Clayton game was played on a muddy field. Lakers is a sprinter, Penny says; speedy, clean-limbed, fast-stepping. You can watch him, sir, and if he isn't sturdy-legged enough for the mud, you might give me another chance. You know, Mr. Lubbock, I've been working out with the second and third elevens right along. I — I think I'm a kind of mud-lark."

Dad Lubbock threw back his head and laughed. It appealed to him as wonderfully funny. When he could speak again, he held out his hand to Moogers.

"I can't make a definite promise," he said

frankly, "but I'll remember your argument. If Lakers fails, and Binner weakens, I may put you in at full-back. Still, you proved long ago that you were pretty soft, and pretty slow, and —"

But he was talking to an empty room. Wallie Moogers had slipped out the door at the first hint of the arraignment.

As they rode to Camp Randall that afternoon, Dad Lubbock asked Penny Wayne about the theory. A little to his surprise, he found the freshman championing it zealously, although the boy denied his responsibility for the visit of Moogers upon the coach.

When Penny trotted out upon the field, close behind Dad Lubbock, it seemed to him all the artillery of the world boomed a deafening welcome. Upon the circus-like tiers of seats that slanted down to the parallelogram of the gridiron, vast crowds were upon their feet, cheering until the din merged into a mighty roar that echoed and re-echoed from the sounding walls of humanity. Banners and pennants and ribbons rippled back and forth like cardinal and blue splotches upon the huge canvas of the white sky. At one end, the university band blared forth patriotic and local airs, to which the bleacher crowds were already

fitting appropriate football words and roaring them forth with more regard for noise than music. Cheer leaders under the guidance of Terwilliger were performing the most surprising gymnastics with their megaphones and limbs. Altogether, Penny Wayne found it difficult to believe that he had not been thrust suddenly into some strange and unreal world of which he knew nothing.

Once the squad was upon the field, Dad Lubbock set his team at its task of signal practice, and then stooped to examine the condition of the field. Penny watched him curiously, with a little smile playing about his lips. The coach poked up the wet dirt with the toe of his shoe, and even reached down for a handful. After a second or two, however, he straightened up, threw back his shoulders, and expelled a full breath through his whistling lips. Next, he glanced quizzically at the "mud-lark."

Penny, following the man's gaze, decided that the holiday unreality of the whole intoxicated atmosphere had affected Wallie Moogers even more than it had himself. The big fellow was pacing back and forth near the side-lines, with brilliant eyes and quivering nostrils. Already, it seemed, his imagination had carried him into the midst of

the game that was to come, and he was fighting by proxy each strategic move of the enemy, stopping its best-planned plays, and tearing through its line as if it were paper. He apparently did not see the crowd at all, nor know there were splashes of blue and white sky above and brown and yellow grass below. He was waiting, waiting —

The game began. As Parker kicked off for Wellworth, Wayne dragged his big friend to the ground between Dad Lubbock and himself, where he squatted during the initial scrimmages. These first minutes of play afforded no dramatic moments. Each team battered hard against the stone-wall line of the other for three or more downs, sometimes punting out of danger on the last, and sometimes surrendering the ball when the ten yards had not been gained.

Then, so gradually that Penny did not detect it until Dad Lubbock groaned, the style of play shifted. For a minute or more, the boy watched keenly, striving to comprehend this new method of attack. But he saw only that Lakers was failing to gain as consistently as he had in other games, and that he was bearing the brunt of every scrimmage. After he had studied the tactics without discovering the reason, he sidled

back of Moogers and around to the other side of the coach.

"I don't understand, Dad," he confessed, pointing out upon the playing field. "Why is Union concentrating its attention upon Lakers?"

Dad Lubbock turned to him with weary eyes. "Because the general on the other side has detected our vulnerable point," he said. Then he rushed on with the explanation, as if to relieve his mind by asking the boy to share the knowledge. "You see, Penny, with Parker in the line, Eidenfessel and Winkle as halves, and Lakers as full-back, we have now the strongest combination I have been able to develop all season. The eleven is nicely balanced as to offensive and defensive play. It has speed which has not been acquired at the expense of weight. It has never been forced to the limit of its skill. But there is a weakness there, cunningly glossed over; and that weakness, surprising as it may seem to you, is centered in Lakers. About him the whole structure has been erected. He is the prop, the supporting girder. And Union knows it as well as I do."

As a matter of fact, the opponents of Wellworth had been drilled for days preceding the game with the sole idea of striking swiftly and deeply at the

tender spot. Their quarter-back was now making use of this plan of campaign, which was simply to send two players bowling straight at Lakers, whom he realized was the keystone of every formation in Dad Lubbock's scheme of attack. No matter what the play might be, the full-back was to be swept out of it. As a result, the latter found it impossible to break free from the first swirl after the ball was passed; and his tremendous speed on his feet was wholly offset.

"But they can't box him forever," Penny told the coach nervously. "He's altogether too fast to coop on every play. After a little, when he solves the counter attack, he'll break loose. Why, he must!"

Over on the other side of Dad Lubbock, Wallie Moogers squirmed uneasily. "They have poor Lakers worried," he announced, speaking to nobody in particular.

"Wait!" advised Wayne; "he may solve the problem. If he can —"

He chopped short the sentence with a groan. Lakers *was* worried. He was slowing up, and losing his dash and snap. Worse, the team of which he was the pivot began to falter. Robbed of the balance-wheel which kept it whirring at

high speed, the football machine was running faultily.

As the game wore on, it became more and more obvious to Penny that Lakers was weakening. It was his first time under a persistent fire like this since his illness, and he was beginning to retreat. Gradually, but none the less surely, Wellworth's team itself was giving ground, sullenly and savagely. At times, the line halted the steady advance until the ball changed hands. But these were only respites. Without the sprinting dashes of Lakers, it could not gain consistently. Each time it was only a question of seconds until Union was once more playing offensively, grinding and battering its way down the field toward the goal.

But to the profound relief of both Penny and the coach, the first quarter was over before the visitors could cross the last white line. Perhaps the minute of rest would serve to put the bewildered full-back upon his feet once more. If it did not, of course, there was nothing to do but put somebody in his place.

For the first seconds of the next quarter, Lakers rallied; but it was only a dash of dying courage and desperation. After that, he found himself boxed on every play again, and shouldered aside,

and halted before he could get moving. The visitors, quick to see their advantage, allowed him no time to recover. Down the field they charged, one yard, two, five, ten at a down, always over the left wing of the line, which Lakers was supposed to bolster. And in the end, as was inevitable, they forced their way across the goal-line, and scored.

After the goal was kicked, Dad Lubbock called to Binner. The runner was useless now. As he beckoned, Wallie Moogers, at his side, rose quickly to his knees.

“My chance?” he asked shrilly.

The coach's nerves were raw. He had forgotten all else in the agony of watching the forced retreat of his eleven, and his body ached as much as if he himself had borne the brunt of every pitiless attack.

“Of course not!” he snapped shortly. “If Lakers isn't fast enough to get going and clear of the interference, do you suppose a slow mover like you could?”

On his other side, Penny Wayne opened his mouth, as if to offer advice; and then closed it again. Instead of speaking, he leaned forward to stare at Moogers.

Wallie's shoulders bent, and the big fellow drew

his cardinal blanket closer about him. He watched with contemplative eyes as Binner was substituted for Lakers, and expressed sincere pleasure as the fresh full-back stopped the human battering-ram that was promptly propelled through the side of the line he backed on defense. Binner was fresh, and the other team was tiring. For this reason, the march down the field was temporarily halted, although it was distressingly clear to Penny that the substitute was playing above his natural ability on the false courage of despair and excitement, and could not last.

But he served his purpose by delaying further scoring before the referee's whistle ended the half. Then Dad Lubbock took his players in hand; and, while they were being rubbed and freshened for a renewal of the bitter struggle, he sought to inspire them.

"They have the jump on us, boys," he told them calmly, "but we will win yet. I am going to strengthen the left half of the line with a fresh player at tackle, and put Reynolds at full. Then we will play a kicking game. If you boys in the line will hold when the time comes, he can drop-kick at least three goals. Don't give up. Don't flinch. Don't stop or hesitate for a single second.

And remember that the game is not lost until the final whistle. You — What's that? ”

Behind him, rasping his raw nerves, there was a sudden crash. It was Moogers — poor, clumsy Wallie Moogers — who had stepped into a pail of water, and tripped and fallen. Ordinarily, the others would have laughed in high glee, and giped him mercilessly with ready repartee; but now they merely scowled. Moogers himself was so oblivious to every-day matters that Penny Wayne, studying him, doubted if he noticed the accident enough to remember it afterward.

CHAPTER XXIII

CROSSING THE GOAL - LINE

THE second half began. On the kick-off, little Jarvis, the Wellworth quarter-back, who was as slippery as an eel, caught the ball, and dodged and squirmed his way up the field to Union's forty-yard line. Then, before the visitors were fairly set, it was in play again, and Eidenfessel was around left end, and running in a free field. If it had been Lakers, with his ability to out-sprint any tackler, a touchdown might have resulted. Even the heavier and less speedy German boy gained a full fifteen yards before he was downed from behind.

Reynolds dropped back to attempt a field-goal. The line braced with the strength of an army in the last ditch. There was a flash of the yellow ball hurtling from the center-rush to the full-back, a clean catch, a smart and resounding thump as his toe caught the pigskin just as its tip touched the ground; and it went tumbling crazily, end over

end, straight above the high bar between the goal-posts. The score was not yet tied, but three to seven was infinitely better than naught to seven.

“And if Reynolds has done it once,” Penny Wayne declared to the coach at his side, “he can do it again. Why —”

The sentence trailed off into nothingness. As Reynolds had drop-kicked, two tacklers were upon him, almost blocking the ball. Now, as they arose, he lay twisting and moaning with a sprained ankle, the first real accident of the football season at Wellworth.

Penny's pæan of gleeful optimism broke in the very midst of its cadence when he discovered the injured full-back on the ground. That meant the end. Two substitutes of the position were clearly incapable of further effort; and Lakers was still shaking and nervous from the bruising he had received. They were still four points behind, and there was no capable full-back to assume the burden, unless —

Wallie Moogers saw the accident as quickly as the others. In an instant, with remarkable agility for one of his weight, he was upon his feet, facing the coach, with an insistence that forced the man backward.

"Give me my chance!" he implored. "I can do it, sir. Lakers is in no shape to go back into the game, and, anyhow, you can't put him in until the beginning of another period."

Dad Lubbock shook a weary, discouraged head. What was the use of reciting again the weaknesses of this willing but impossible youngster? He stared hopelessly at the group of substitutes. They were eager enough, but not one of them would do.

"You must put me in, sir," demanded Wallie Moogers, fairly insane with enthusiasm. "Why, this morning, sir, you said I might have a chance if Lakers and Binner failed. I can plough through the mud, I know. Don't you understand? Don't you recall that time in practice I proved I could do it? I — I tell you, Mr. Lubbock, I am a mud-lark."

The coach looked at him with startled eyes. Beyond, Penny Wayne lifted a warning hand.

"Try him," he advised laconically.

"It's my kind of a field," argued Moogers eagerly. "Give me just five minutes out there. If I don't make good, take me out. Why, sir, in this mud—"

Once more, Dad Lubbock peered into the play-

er's face, as if to determine how serious he might be. Something he saw in the bright eyes, or in the tense mouth, or perhaps the broad, quivering shoulders, made him suddenly yield.

"Go in!" he cried. "Go in and save the game, you — you 'mud-lark.'" And he looked at Penny Wayne, who was turning his face away, and laughed a little hysterically.

Wallie Moogers walked out upon the white-ribbed parallelogram. Already, the teams were lining up. In the middle of the field, nine of the visitors crouched near the forty-five-yard line, ready to spring forward when the ball was kicked. One played back for the final tackle if the others should miss, and one was building a little tee on the forty-yard line for the kick. The Wellworth players scattered over their territory in the positions Dad Lubbock had taught them in the weary months of practice.

The ball sailed straight to Moogers. On the side-lines, Penny Wayne sucked in his breath in a frenzy of fear. But the big full-back was as cool as the veterans. He caught the pigskin cleanly, allowing it to fall against his breast and into his arms, and lowered his head, as a charging animal of the wild forests might. With a cry of pleasure,

that carried to those at the side of the field, he plunged forward into the protecting V behind the quickly formed interference.

Penny Wayne clenched his fists until the nails cut into the palms. He knew what to expect better than did the coach, but the fulfilment of Moogers' promise was a revelation. Slow? Why, Wallie was leaping forward as Lakers might have done, actually crowding the fleet-footed Parker and the shadowy Winkle ahead of him. One by one, the secondary interference dwindled into nothingness, victims of the determined Union players; but still the runner was free. Parker fell in warding off a tackler, and then Winkle. Moogers was striding forward alone now, with no defense before him.

A tackler launched himself, and for an instant clung desperately. Moogers pushed him off with his open hand. Another dived through the air, forgetting in his haste the rule requiring one foot on the ground; and Wallie — big, slow, dull-witted Wallie — dodged suddenly with a master divination of the method of attack, and left the disgusted tackler sprawling upon the ground. Slow! Penny laughed wildly, and fought off a mad impulse to run out there and congratulate

the big fellow who had toiled throughout the season for this final opportunity.

They downed him at last by sheer weight, but he had carried the ball a full forty yards. He surrendered it greedily to an official, and raced to his position, ready before the others.

Quarter-back Jarvis, gazing doubtfully at his back-field, glimpsed the aspect of power in Moo-gers' belligerent attitude, and signaled for him to take the ball through the right wing of the opposing line. Accustomed as he was to Lakers' lightning starts, he was only half prepared for the rushing full-back now playing, and barely saved a fumble by a sudden flirt of his hands that drove the oval into Wallie's stomach. Wallie grunted, but Penny knew no mere physical pain would dull his friend's football sense that day. The big fellow shifted the ball quickly under his arm, and bored into the crouching Union line without the loss of an instant. The defense held for a second, and then he had catapulted through it, and ten yards beyond, before the three clinging tacklers could down him.

Up in the stands, the crowds awakened into renewed enthusiasm. Here and there, a man told his neighbor of the Clayton game, in which the

present full-back had turned the tide of victory toward Wellworth. Through his megaphone, Terwilliger asked thunderingly, "What's the matter with Wallie Moogers?" and thousands chorused back, "He's all right!" It must have been the only sound the full-back heard as he pushed off the tacklers who were sprawling over him, and arose to his feet. A cold shower bath could not have set his nerves in a greater tingle.

They gave him the ball again, and he lowered his head and plunged forward. It seemed to Penny Wayne that every player on the Union team piled upon him at the end, and he watched apprehensively to see if he were hurt. As a matter of fact, when he wriggled free, there was a big bump on one of his temples. Even back where he sat, Penny could hear anxious little Jarvis ask "Hurt, old boy?" and Wallie's contemptuous, "Not a bit!" Wayne fell to grinning foolishly, and digging Dad Lubbock gently in the ribs.

Presently, Wellworth lost the ball on a fumble. It was now, on defense, that Moogers faced the crisis which had overwhelmed his predecessors. The very first play split the line and cannonaded full upon him, where it wavered hesitatingly, and then fell back for a loss. Again Union attempted

to force him aside, and again he braced his gigantic body, and tackled and held. After that, grudgingly admitting that he was invulnerable, the commanding quarter-back of the visitors sent his runners around the ends. Whether he knew it or not, this was an open admission of defeat; for Dad Lubbock was confident enough of his well-drilled ends and halves. Nor was he mistaken. On the fourth down, Union fell back to punt.

“Watch him, Dad,” cautioned Penny Wayne. “He may surprise you.”

As the ball left the ground on the scrimmage-line, Wallie was after it like a hawk through a flock of newly-hatched chicks. There was a slurring line of dirty yellow, marking the passage of the ball, which was blotted out by a blur of soiled brown moleskins, representing the full-back's flight through a gap in the human wall. The punter lifted his leg to kick, and dropped the ball upon his instep. Then Moogers was upon him, forbidding and irresistible; and, as the human vortex sucked them down into its midst, it was the Wellworth player who curled his plump body about the precious bit of leather.

The coach beat joyfully against his knee with

a closed hand. Wayne laughed from sheer pleasure.

After that, it was only a triumphant march down the field. Line after line was gained and passed. The Union team was growing leg and arm weary, and a little appalled by this new player, mightier than any who had gone before him; and Moogers was fresh — and confident. Time after time he gained the necessary yards, coming out of the scrimmages to the grateful monotony of the official's shout of, "First down; ten yards to gain," followed hard by the delirious cheers of the sport-mad crowd, ending always "Give Wallie Moogers the ball! Give Wallie Moogers the ball!"

Ten yards from the goal-line, he looked over its crouching defenders before him, and whispered a word of advice to Jarvis. The center-rush and right guard were not inter-locked as they should have been, and Moogers' quick eye had spied the weak link in the chain. In a flash, he was at it, had snapped it open, and was battling his way through the tacklers behind. They repulsed him with the strength inspired by impending disaster, but they were meeting a giant beckoned on by ambition and hardened by a long season of grueling practice. There was no halting Wallie Moo-

gers with victory just beyond his pudgy fingertips. With four of the Union players clinging to him, and entwining his body and limbs like huge snakes, he staggered across the last line for a touchdown. The score was now in Wellworth's favor, and Parker's kick for goal made it 10 — 7.

"But I don't understand," said Dad Lubbock during the minute between quarters. "If there were really —"

Penny leaned over to him, and spoke rapidly. As he talked, the coach's face cleared. When he was quite through, Dad Lubbock looked up at the sky, watching a queer little cloud racing pell-mell into a solid bank of its mates. It was a trim cloud, with no fleecy, irregular edges.

"Oh!" he said presently. "If I hadn't been blinded to his possibilities, I might have known. It took you, Penny Wayne, to foresee his playing in this game."

Moogers scored again in the final period; did it almost single-handed. As Wellworth was already a comfortable three points in the lead, there was no need of the extra seven; but Wallie was crazed with the joy of realizing his dreams. Up in the stands, they were gloating over him, as if he had always been their hero. When it was

all over, and before the crowds could swarm upon the field, Dad Lubbock ran forward and pumped the full-back's hand until the arm ached.

"Umph!" said Wallie Moogers, when he could make himself heard above the din, "I guess they do love a fat man, after all."

The coach and Penny Wayne exchanged amused glances.

"Wallie," said Dad Lubbock, "what do you weigh now?"

The full-back looked up sheepishly. "Well," he admitted, "I've trained down a lot. I sweated and worked off over thirty pounds altogether. Wayne kept me going at top speed every day in practice."

"I understand now," admitted the coach. "Why, there isn't an ounce of superfluous flesh on you. Your face hasn't changed much, but your big body is all bone and muscle. And as for your needing mud to play your best game — pooh!"

"Well," objected Moogers, his face clouding, "it took a muddy field to make me do it today, didn't it?"

It was Penny Wayne who answered. "Wallie," he said, "the field isn't muddy at all. The shower in the city was heavy, but out here at Camp Ran-

dall they got just the fringe of the storm. There never was any more dampness than a heavy dew would produce in summer. How on earth did you get the notion the field was muddy?"

Wallie Moogers stared with mild astonishment at the ground, which was undoubtedly dry. "Why, I — I took it for granted at first, I guess; and then, when I jumped up to beg Dad Lubbock to put me into the game, I felt the water slush and squash in the bottom of my shoe."

"In the dressing-room, between halves," explained his classmate, "you accidentally stepped into a pail of water. That's how your shoe became wet. Remember it?"

"Why, no," faltered Wallie. "I must have been so excited I didn't know anything that happened." A new expression of honest satisfaction was creeping over his face. "Then the game I played this afternoon was — was my regular game, the kind I could play on a dry field any day?"

"Exactly!" said Dad Lubbock promptly. "The kind you will be playing every Saturday afternoon next season. I have you and Penny Wayne to thank for the final solution of my back-field problem. Right now, I doubt if there

is a better full-back in this part of the country than you, Wallie Moogers."

By this time, the crowds from the stands were swarming the playing field. Several persons were standing about, regarding Moogers with awe and wonder.

"It isn't quite fair," objected a new voice, which was Terwilliger's, "to limit the comparison. I don't believe there is a better full-back anywhere."

CHAPTER XXIV

WHILE EVERYBODY CHEERED

“MY DEAR WAYNE:— I have been instructed by the Athletic Association to invite you to attend the annual banquet given to the football team and substitutes. It will be held at Rankin’s Monday evening at seven-thirty. I hope you will be able to attend.

“Very truly yours,
“MACKLIN R. LUBBOCK.”

“DEAR DAD:— The invitation is a mighty kind one, but it is hard for me to say ‘yes.’ The only game I ever played found me disobeying orders, and the more I have thought about it since, the worse I have felt. But if I have just a fair share of luck, I am going to be one of your star boarders at the banquet next year.

“Yours,
“PENFIELD WAYNE.”

“DEAR PENNY:— Don’t wait for next year. Come Monday night. The Athletic Association is asking you because I told it to. If you are not on hand when the soup is served, I will have you

kidnaped and carried over by the best seven line-men in the West.

“DAD.”

“MR. D. LUBBOCK,

“SIR:—Just to save trouble, I shall come on my own two legs.

“PENNY.”

During the whole of Monday, the football players were pelted with one all-important question. It was couched in many different forms, but the point was always the same.

“Look here, Wallie,” Terwilliger said to Moogers, as that well-rounded but muscled person perspired before the mirror, “what’s the secret everybody is holding back? Now, honestly, Wallie, don’t you know a thing about it?”

“No,” shouted the full-back, as for the seventh time his tie slipped into a loose pair of strings.

“Aw, you can’t make me believe that nobody knows except the secretary of the Athletic Association and Dad Lubbock. I think —”

Moogers faced about angrily. “Twig, let me alone. It is almost half-past seven now, and my tie isn’t right yet. Ask somebody else about it. I don’t know. Dad hasn’t taken me into his confidence.”

He turned back to the mirror, and with a gesture none too gentle gathered up the ends of the offending tie.

"But, Wallie, just tell me what you think. Is there even a ghost of a chance for playing?"

Whatever retort Moogers intended making was quite unnecessary. From the direction of the door came a silencer that was more forcible and more complete than words. It was a sofa pillow that plumped full in Terwilliger's face, making him shake his head and sniff indignantly. But when he had recovered, he did nothing more violent than hurl back the missile at the boy in the doorway.

"What is the news, Penny?" he demanded. "Wallie is trying to tell me that you football players don't know any more about it than we others do."

Penny laughed. "I'm sure I don't know any more about it than you do, Twig. Better ask Dad Lubbock. Aren't you nearly ready, Wallie?"

Moogers showed a grumpy face. "I suppose I shall have to go the way I am, but my tie isn't right. It will spoil the whole evening for me. Twig, where's my coat?"

"Remember," warned Terwilliger, as he stood at the top of the stairs seeing them off, "remember

that after every course, Wallie, you are supposed to hippity-hop around the table. Keeps your flesh down, you know. And when they bring on the turkey, you stretch out your hands and do 'Joy.' You will remember to do 'Joy,' won't you, Wallie?"

"You shut up!" retorted Moogers sulkily. But as the two turned into State Street, he said to Penny, "Do you know, I like Terwilliger. He keeps me stirred up and alert, and that's just what I need. If he would only stop calling attention to my ties! I can't seem to learn how to make the things jump into a respectable knot."

The little room at Rankin's Hotel which had been rented for the banquet was festooned and draped and banked in cardinal, with a bowl of red carnations in the middle of the table. But the feasters themselves, altogether ill at ease, were not a particularly merry party until Moogers, in his anxiety to pass a plate of olives, upset his water, and in a gallant attempt to catch it spilled his soup over Mr. Rankin's carpet. The accident cleared the atmosphere instantly, and from that moment until the coffee was served, it would have required a megaphone to make any single speaker heard above the joyous clatter.

After the manner of college students, the conversations were largely exchanges of good-natured badinage. Arnie Borglum asked Lakers how many football teams he thought a man should play on in a single game, and Lakers solemnly retorted that he could do better than that by getting out for the next dual meet, engaging two alleys in the hundred-yard dash, and then beating himself out for first place. Winkle argued against any rule that defined the number of players on a team, anyhow, and demanded to know by what right a Sherlock Holmes on the side-lines could count them. As the argument seemed to be growing a little too personal, Dad Lubbock ended it by declaring that anybody who fought off a fever to help out his college could afford to rest on his honors and smile at all jokes.

“If my tie would only stay down,” confided Moogers to Wayne, “I could afford to laugh at a few myself.”

Wee Willie interposed. “Get a job with me this summer on the section of the B. L. & R., and I will teach you how to lay ties, Wallie.”

The remark was greeted with loud groans, which were checked only when Captain Parker rapped on the table with his spoon. There was a moment

during which the noise subsided as he rose from his chair. Then it turned to hearty and boisterous applause, ending with, "Rah! rah! rah! Park-er!" three times over.

"Fellows," began the captain, "I really haven't anything to say. I am gratified over the unbroken string of victories, and I am convinced we can defeat — Well, I think old Dad Lubbock has something he wants to say."

Again they cheered heartily. Twice the coach opened his mouth to speak, and twice the patter of hands and the shouting forced him to begin anew.

"Boys," he said, "I have two things to tell you. Both are interesting, but one of them I suspect you are especially eager to hear. That shall be first."

He paused, looking about the long table at the faces grown tense with anticipation and hope.

"Wellworth won the championship in this section of the country. Yates won the championship of the East. You all know that. Most of you, also, know that we have received an answer to our challenge for a game with them. They refuse to play us here."

Even Eidenfessel's stolid face knotted into a frown.

"But," continued Dad Lubbock, beaming like a young father playing Santa Claus, "they will agree to meet us on a neutral gridiron, in Chicago. If you boys are willing, we will play them there a week from Saturday."

The cheering that had gone before was as nothing compared to this. The noise broke no windows, but it reached the ears of Henri, the imported French pastry cook, who ran hurriedly from the oven room to the kitchen, thinking it signaled an attack of bloodthirsty Indians until Mr. Rankin patiently explained. When the applause had begun to die down a little, the coach raised his hand for silence.

"You boys understand," he continued, "that this will not be a game in our regular schedule. It is a post-season contest. Please bear that fact in mind while I proceed."

Hitching forward in his chair, Penny allowed an elbow to rest on the table. The game with Yates had been the chief topic of talk for several days. In view of its possibility, the eleven had not broken training. But what was this second point of Dad's?

"You boys all know, doubtless, that a certain amount of discipline is necessary in coaching

a football team. The man who undertakes to direct an eleven through a season must be obeyed implicitly.

“Early in the season, one of you boys trying for my team was guilty of a breach of discipline. I suspended him for the season. You all know how he has helped since that time. Although he was barred from making the eleven, he” — here Dad Lubbock smiled boyishly himself — “he worked and coaxed and planned with others until he just about made my eleven. . . . Thank you, but allow me to finish. . . . Well, the season is over now. So I am glad to say that when we play Yates, the first substitute quarter-back will be Penny Wayne.”

In the wild enthusiasm that followed this announcement, the little freshman began to appreciate that the football squad was glad, very glad. Never was a boy more joyously thumped on back and sides and head than Penny. With a mighty exhibition of strength, Eidenfessel and Wee Willie Winkle lifted him, struggling, to the table-top. From every side came cries of “Speech! Speech!” And when he attempted to escape, Wallie Moogers caught him and held him fast while Lakers showered him with the great bunch

of red carnations. He was very warm and embarrassed, and he wanted to get off the table.

While they were still laughing and applauding, Penny noticed that somebody on the opposite side was rising to his feet, and saying, "Mr. Chairman! Mr. Chairman!" It was little Jarvis, the Wellworth quarter-back. As soon as he could make himself heard, he spoke rapidly and jerkily, but very earnestly.

"Fellows, I don't think any of you will say I am afraid to play in the big game. I'd like to. Yes, I'd like to. But I won't. I am a fair quarter-back. Dad thinks I am better than any of the other candidates who had a chance to make the team. He said I must play out the season. Back in October I asked him if there wasn't a better one. There was — then, but he couldn't play. Well the season is over now, and I — I am man enough to step down and make room for him. Down in my heart, I know the position belongs to Penny Wayne. He should play against Yates."

In the moment of absolute silence that followed, Jarvis reached out a hand to Penny, and gravely helped him climb from the table. Wayne gripped it hard, winking a little uncertainly,

but not speaking. Yet his thanks and his admiration had been amply expressed.

Then the cheering volleyed out, twice as loud as it had been before. They cheered for Jarvis, and for Penny, and for Dad Lubbock, and for Parker, and for everybody who sat about the table; and, just to make sure no one had been omitted, they began a second time with Jarvis and went through the whole list once more.

When the banqueters left the hotel, Penny and Moogers walked down the street together.

“Penny,” said Moogers, his voice worn to a husky whisper, “if you can just get into the post-season game — if you can just be playing quarter-back while I am playing full-back — I’ll be so tickled that I won’t ever care again, as long as I live, whether my ties are on right or not.”

CHAPTER XXV

THE POST-SEASON GAME

HE was playing again! He, Penfield Wayne, who had squatted day after day on the side-lines through other games, watching hungrily as his proxies ran and bucked and tackled, but rejoicing unselfishly at their successes, was himself crouching for the kick-off. The ball lay tilted on end. On either side of it, strung along its forty-yard line, Wellworth's team awaited the signal. A wintry gale blew in his face, stinging and lashing. An icy field spread bleakly before him. But these conditions could not still the glad song in his heart. He was playing again!

Parker swept his eyes over the eleven, to assure himself for the last time that every man was ready. Penny dug his cleated shoes determinedly into the frozen surface. Above the howl of the wind, he caught the official, "Are you ready, Yates? Are you ready, Wellworth?" Then Parker swung his toe into the tilted football, and the post-season game was begun.

It was a sturdy kick. The ball leaped onward and upward like a swallow on the wing. As it lifted from the little mound, Penny was away and running down the field with the others, exulting over his muscled legs that carried him forward as swiftly as they had in the dreams that were coming true. Behind him, swinging diagonally from the extreme left toward the center of the gridiron, pounded Kern, Eidenfessel, Borglum and Moogers. Over at the other side, and also moving gradually inward, were the other five, with Winkle leading. Down the very middle of the field charged Parker.

"A good kick," Penny told himself; "high and far. Half of us will be under it before it comes down."

He was already on the Yates forty-yard line, and the ball still soared somewhere up in the sky. That whoever caught it might be penned easily, with no opportunity to escape along the sides of the field, they were advancing in two converging columns, ready to close in when it fell.

But still it soared. Ahead of him, the Yates players edged here and there uncertainly, with two or three rushing straight ahead, presumably to build up an interference. At the risk of slipping

on the icy surface, Wayne looked up into the air for the ball, startled to discover that it was not where he had expected. His eyes found it presently, however, and told him it was the plaything of the wind, which was buffeting it about as if it were a scrap of paper that —

He shouted a warning. He tried desperately to stop, or to turn. But the mad impetus of his running made him slide helplessly over the frozen field. Before he could check himself, Moogers and Eidenfessel were upon him, both fighting to halt. When the three were able to face about, it was too late.

The ball, caught by the gale, had sailed up straighter and straighter under the force of the retarding wind, after the fashion of a kite. When it began to descend, it had lost the energy of motion imparted by the kick, and responded only to gravity and the cyclonic air current. As a result, it moved backward toward Wellworth's goal, rather than forward toward Yates', gloating, if footballs ever gloat, over the queer trick of fate that had glazed a field with ice so capably that none of Dad Lubbock's players dared look up from the treacherous footing. And now, when every one of them had far over-run the ball, it

came down near the middle of the field, a little more than ten yards beyond the point from which it had been kicked. In another instant, a Yates runner scooped it up leisurely, with no tacklers within striking distance, and carried it fifty yards for a touchdown.

Again the boisterous wind lent assistance when the goal was kicked, buoying up the ball till it cleared the cross-bar by a wide margin, and rode through the air into the bleacher seats beyond. After a single minute of play, the score-board read: Yates, 7; Wellworth, 0.

"It was a lucky accident," Penny told himself stoutly. "It can't happen again. I must keep the fellows from getting downhearted."

He moved over to where Captain Parker was talking to Moogers and Eidenfessel.

"It was a lucky accident," said Wallie serenely.

"And again it can't happen," declared Petey.

Wayne filled his lungs with the fresh, invigorating air. They were trying to encourage him! Why, was ever such a team? They could not lose!

"Yes, I elected to kick off after the touchdown," Parker told him nonchalantly. "I am not worrying about what will happen this time."

And so they began all over, considering the

the seven points as merely a handicap to overcome, and being no whit downcast nor discouraged. The kick was lower on the next attempt, and carried much farther. The Yates player signaled a fair catch, choosing to punt back with the wind. On Wellworth's twenty-yard line, where Winkle was downed with the ball, the real struggle began.

Penny called his first play. It was Eidenfessel through right tackle. The quarter knelt suddenly behind Moody, at center, and opened his hands for the pass. Without the loss of an instant, the football machine that Dad Lubbock had built up plunged forward, and there was a clear gain of five yards.

It was not the mere advance, however, that set Penny smiling happily, but the knowledge that every player had done his part. Parker, the right tackle, and Lane, the right end, boxed the Yates tackle neatly. Borglum shouldered aside the guard. Eidenfessel, with the ball under his arm, crashed into the line, aiming his attack by the broad back of Parker, with Penny, Moogers and Winkle safeguarding the play and fairly lifting the German boy along. From the extreme outside, little Kern, the end, dashed around to thrust the Yates left half from the path, while

the line held staunchly. The gain was not Eidenfessel's alone, but the combined effort of eleven Wellworth players striving as one. It was that perfection of team-work for which Dad Lubbock had toiled the season through, and which was now made possible with an entire freshman back-field to complete the harmonious mechanism.

Half-way down the field, to the fifty-yard line, Wellworth hewed its course in this manner, with a varying attack into which each player fitted with the precision and frictionless nicety of human skill developed to its final degree. Here, quite without warning, there was a fumble that gave Yates the ball.

"Nobody's fault," said Parker promptly. "Simply the fortunes of the game."

"Nobody's fault," echoed Wee Willie Winkle solemnly.

"Such things happen in the best of teams," chuckled Moogers. "Anyhow, I have been wanting to warm up on defense."

There it was again. No one of them had fumbled; it was simply an unavoidable accident, for which they were jointly responsible. Penny could have cried aloud his thanksgiving for the boon of playing with such fellows.

Because of his alert mind and quick eyes, he played close behind the line on defense, with Winkle, a lone sentinel in the distance, guarding the goal. Penny had been drilled, not only on the practice field in actual scrimmages, but on the side-lines as a student of the game. Unless you are playing, you cannot coach in football; this rule of itself might rightly be interpreted to mean that you see and learn more as an on-looker than as a participant. They season recruits for the big baseball teams that way, sometimes keeping them on the bench day after day for a year or more before asking them to play in a scheduled contest. And so it was with Penny and football.

Yates, like Wellworth, began its offense with formations that developed and flitted and dissolved as smoothly as cloud-shadows. From his position, Penny watched admiringly as its runners wove in and out, striking suddenly, cleanly, unexpectedly. Until they were attuned to the task, the Yates eleven depended upon the fundamental close attacks; but as Wellworth began to solve these plays, and to shatter and stop them, their scope was gradually extended until the more brilliant open runs came into their own. But

with a lead of seven points, as Penny told himself, the team could well afford to risk forward passes, delayed and double passes, fake kicks and even —

As if his very thought had carried to the strategic general of the opponents, its quarter suddenly rattled off a four-number signal, passed the ball to an end who circled behind him, and then stepped back and out of the interference. The deliberate flaw in the mechanism of running off the play warned Penny. It was to be a trick of some kind. As he leaped forward involuntarily, with a cry of alarm, he recognized the odd formation. Yates was attempting a trick play that was almost a twin of the one he had invented himself at the beginning of the season!

Curiously enough, his first clear thought was of how crude and defective it was, and of how many chances there were of its failing. He realized, not its one possible attribute of strength, but its many points of weakness. Why, with intelligent defense, any wide-awake player could thwart its success. Small wonder that Dad Lubbock had forbidden Wellworth to retain the trick!

He moved rapidly to the right, and closed in behind Borglum and Parker, both surging mightily

in a desire to break the line that opposed and held them back. Squeezing his small body between them, he wedged himself in the tiny opening.

As if appreciating immediately his effort, the two players cooperated. Parker shouldered the Yates tackle outward, to the right; Borglum pushed his guard to the left. This left a gap of a foot or more, through which Penny promptly slipped.

After that, it was comparatively simple. The prime objection to the trick was that its execution permitted of no secondary offense of safeguarding; to further the belief that the play was to go around the opposite end, it was necessary for the full-back and the halves to move in that direction. As the Yates end turned for the long throw to his quarter, Penny suddenly straightened up. The ball swished toward him, three feet above his head. With a leap, he reached high his eager hands, and caught it with palms and fingers, as one does a baseball.

When he faced toward the goal, a blast of the gale staggered him. His feet slipped on the icy ground. Between the two, he lost a precious instant in starting his run. But once he was moving rhythmically, he tore into the teeth of the wind.

and over the slippery field without faltering. Behind him, he heard pounding footsteps, growing fainter and fainter as he sped away; from the stands boomed the Wellworth yell, a torn and tattered cheer as it battled with the tempest; once, in a lull, he caught the bass roar of Moogers' triumphant encouragement.

He smiled, griping harder at the ball beneath his arm. It was much more than a selfish satisfaction that overflowed his heart; it was proof, conclusive proof, that the trick play was one upon which a team could not rely. Dad Lubbock was right, just as he had always been!

When he touched the ball to the ground, he was yards ahead of the nearest tackler, with ample time to select the point at which to down it. He guarded it jealously until the official carried it out upon the field for the try-at-goal, and watched breathlessly as Parker kicked — and missed! Once more that day, the wind aided Yates by eddying the ball to the left of the goal-posts. The score was: Yates, 7; Wellworth, 6.

Parker, as was to be expected, was almost heart-broken over his failure to add the tying point. But again the team smiled in the face of its disappointment.

"A good try if it did miss," encouraged Winkle.
"Next time!"

"Too much wind for anybody to expect to kick a goal," declared Penny. "Wait till we change goals, though!"

"An ill wind," chuckled Moogers; "yes, a very decidedly ill, out-of-its-head wind. Now for another touchdown!"

But they failed to make it. During the few remaining minutes of that quarter, indeed, they did not once come within striking distance of the goal. When the next period began, with the wind at their backs, Penny called for a kicking game, signalling Parker to punt at every opportunity, and thus offsetting, with one swing of the Wellworth captain's leg, the dearly-won yards that Yates had gained in a dozen bitter scrimmages. At the end of the half, the ball was near the middle of the field.

"There is little I can say," Dad Lubbock told them in the rub-down room under the grandstand. "You are playing a splendid game, just as I knew you would. Thanks to your kicking tactics, you are now the fresher team of the two. During this coming third period, I want you to play on defense and save yourselves as much as

possible. Then, when the last quarter begins, you must call upon every reserve ounce of energy and muscle and Wellworth loyalty, and you must sweep Yates down the field before you. You can do it, boys!"

They all nodded solemnly, without speaking, and trotted back upon the field. And for the next fifteen minutes, because they played a steadier and therefore a less daring and brilliant game than they had at the outset, Yates fancied its opponents were weakening and breaking under the cruel strain, and was itself spurred to unnatural effort in an attempt to cross the goal-line once more. But when the whistle blew, and the teams changed ends for the final quarter, the score was still 7 — 6.

Then Wellworth loosed its full fury and power of attack, and under the skilled guidance of Quarter-back Wayne played as it never had before. In its panic over this sudden recuperation, Yates rushed substitutes out to take the places of its tiring linemen, and braced and tautened and held with the grim desperation of impending defeat. But the odds were in Wellworth's favor now. Its team was the stronger. Its machine moved on eleven cogs of equal potency while Yates' ground

and slipped upon its weak members. Even the gale, sweeping Dad Lubbock's boys before it, jeered with whistling howls the players it had deserted.

But the march down the field was not unbroken. Three times in the first ten minutes, Wellworth failed to make its yards, and the ball changed hands. Yates punted always on its first down. Its low, bounding kicks skidded and slipped over the icy field, often eluding Winkle and the others who raced back to his aid, until the gain was most substantial. But the Wellworth players never faltered. Where their runner was downed by a tackler, they lined up to regain the lost ground.

"That only makes it a little more difficult," Penny would stimulate his back-field. "Now, into them again, fellows!"

Finally, as was inevitable, they cleaved their way to the very shadows of the goal-posts. Here Yates upheld the traditions of many years, and presented a stone-wall defense. Winkle crashed upon it, and was flung back for a loss. Eidenfessel charged furiously without gain. Penny shrilled another quick signal, which hurled Moogers full upon the swaying, heaving line like some huge pro-

jectile. But still Yates battled him back, with its players spent and dazed and sick.

A great admiration for such bull-dog courage filled Penny's heart. Victory from such opponents was worth all it cost, and more. To prove Wellworth a little better, a little stronger, a little more unified, was to single out an eleven that could not know defeat. For he, and every player Dad Lubbock had woven into his master harmony, was as confident of winning as though the scoreboard already blazoned the news to the waiting thousands in the stands.

On the fourth down, Parker dropped back, snatched the ball from Penny's eager hands, and plunged forward. With him plunged Wayne, Eidenfessel, Winkle and Moogers. Yates' line split asunder before the steadfast, volleying, concerted attack, but behind it somewhere a tackler reached the runner and downed him almost on the very goal-line.

But the ball was not over. Six precious inches from the line it lay. By virtue of Wellworth's failure to gain the necessary ten yards, it now belonged to Yates.

"Next time, fellows!" cried Penny, as the team lined up on defense. "Next —"

"Two minutes to play," the referee was saying, in answer to a question from the other team.

Two minutes! Why, it couldn't be possible. There must be some hideous mistake. The quarter-back had forgotten all about the time. Only two minutes more! His face blanched. If Yates kicked, as it certainly would, his team would have to plod its way back for thirty or forty yards to reach the goal again — and they could not do it in two minutes!

There was just one chance. He shut his lips grimly, and called Winkle to play close behind the line. Unless they could break up the play, it mattered little what happened after the kick.

"Between right tackle and guard," he whispered to a trio composed of Moogers, Eidenfessel and Winkle, massing them carelessly behind the center to divert suspicion. "Yates' left wing is weakening, and Parker and Borglum will rip a hole for you. Low, fellows, and hard! We must do — Now!"

The ball had been lifted suddenly from the ground and thrown well behind the goal-line for the punt. But at Penny's signal, the Wellworth backs had charged, tearing their way through the opposing line with crazed, irresistible force. For

a long moment, the boy was swept and swirled in a chaos of mad confusion. He was buffeted this way and that. Players fell on every side like soldiers shot in battle. But instinctively he realized that he was still being carried forward, and that his ears had caught no sound of thudding kick. In the end, he plunged headlong into what seemed a pit of twisting mortals.

When he had struggled to his feet, tense, white-faced, afraid of what he might discover, he saw a Yates player lying almost beneath him, with the ball in his arms.

There was no need of the official decision. He knew! The punter had been downed before he could kick; downed, not by any one player, but by the combined effort of the Wellworth team. It was a safety, scoring two points, and it made the total: Wellworth, 8; Yates, 7.

A few seconds still remained to play. There was the formality of another kick-off, a single scrimmage, and a final lining-up, before the referee piped a long blast and tossed his cap high into the air, to signal that the game was over.

After they had flung their arms about each other's necks and cheered for the losers with honest zeal, and listened to the Yates players

returning the compliment manfully, Penny turned to his team-mates.

"Fellows," he cried, "we couldn't have won in a better way. I didn't win the game, and Petey didn't, and Wallie didn't, and Arnie didn't, and — Well, no single one of us was responsible. It was the *team* that won, the whole eleven playing as a unit. We won because each of us forgot self in his loyalty to the other ten. We couldn't have wished for a better way, could we, fellows?"

By this time, the undergraduates who had taken the trip to Chicago were sweeping down from their seats and pouring out upon the field. As Penfield Wayne smiled at Terwilliger, leading them all, he faced toward Winkle.

"Wee Willie," he declared earnestly, "I've learned my last lesson about loyalty today. It has found for me the best friends, the best class, the best coach, the best team and the best college in all the wide world. . . . Let's give the good old Wellworth yell once more!"

THE END.

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